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NMA 4

Contents

Editorial.....	2
My Own Ears	
Jennifer Fowler	3
Whirlies, Whirliworks and Singing Stunters	
Sarah Hopkins	7
Gillian Whitehead in Discussion with Noel Sanders	10
Three Works: 1983 – 1985	
Barbara Woof	13
An Exploration of Process	
Caroline Wilkins	17
The Contribution of Women Composers	
Pauline Oliveros	18
Editions Number One See	
Sue Blakey	20
Teaching about Women's Music in an American University	
Susan Erickson	21
Lights, Mirrors and Miniatures?	
Jan Friedl	24
Bronwyn Calcutt's Music Theatre in Aboriginal Communities	27
Space and Resonance as Determinants of Musical Style and Sound Art: a Personal View	
Ros Bandt	30
Tuned to Physical Presence	
Joyce Hinterding	34
Helen Gifford: an Interview	
Lynne Stevens	35
A Living Art — Performance	
Vineta Lagzdina	38
Disarray	
Cindy John	39
Captions	
Kay Morton	41
Notes on Music Graphics	
Catherine Schieve	43
Jo Truman and Trevor Wishart Talk in a Noisy London Cafe, mid-July 1985	53
Music and the Exhibition 'Peace and Nuclear War in the Australian Landscape'	
Wendy Hiscocks	55

Editorial

The fourth issue of NMA is devoted to the music of women composers. Its appearance is timely. Not only does 1985 mark the end of the U.N. Decade for Women, but it has also seen a considerable amount of performance activity in women's music. For example, in Melbourne this year a series of concerts of women's music was presented by the New Moods Women's Festival, as part of Victoria's 150th anniversary celebrations.

These performances and the associated publicity have focused attention, if only temporarily, on a generally neglected and relatively unknown area of music. Of the total number of active composers listed in the Australia Music Centre's recently published **Directory of Australian Composers**, 16% are women. Yet, with a few exceptions, women composers have a very low profile in comparison with their male counterparts. Although women's music is performed infrequently, there is an even greater lack of writing on women's music, and in particular contemporary music. This dearth of written material is even reflected in the three previous issues of NMA.

This issue, then, aims to increase public awareness of current women's music in Australia, and, at the same time, provide an opportunity for women composers to present and discuss their music, their ideas and compositional methods. The primary objective is the documentation rather than the evaluation of women's work. To this end, contributions were elicited mainly from composers. Also it was felt necessary to include material that, as far as possible, presented a cross-section of the areas in which women are working.

The response has been very positive: the large number of contributions contained in the issue, and the even greater number received indicate that it has filled a perceived need. The articles themselves, and the three interviews, vary greatly in content, focus and presentation, and reflect the diversity of current women's music. Some of the writers are known and established composers; others are young and unknown. Some are working in the mainstream of contemporary music, whereas others are involved in more exploratory areas.

In their articles, Susan Erickson and Jan Friedl examine some of the more general issues of women's music, such as education, performance and compositional genres. Other common issues emerge out of the material and raise broader questions concerning the nature of women's music generally and, in particular, the question of a women's aesthetic or approach to composition. No particular position on these questions has been taken here, since this issue aims to present a forum for discussion. It is important, however, that they be approached through the music rather than being imposed on it. Most important is the work itself: that it be done and be seen to be done. The article by Pauline Oliveros, a prominent figure in American new music, provides a focus or point of departure for this discussion.

NMTAPE 4 accompanies this issue. All but one of the items have been provided by contributors to the issue and most of them illustrate their respective articles in various ways, making it an important adjunct to the magazine.

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My Own Ears

Jennifer Fowler

"All that I heard was my own ears drum." (Sappho).

What next?

I am emerging from a period of illness, and feel able to start work again. There are so many ideas — jottings in notebooks, definite beginnings, ideas mulled over for several years. There is also much left over from other pieces already written: pieces which ended up as tidy, neat organisms condensed from whole areas of exploration. Suddenly, the time and energy left seem finite.

Someone has asked for a piece for violin and piano. I think of the sound of a violin, the sound of a piano. Stale. These are instruments which have been constantly 'worked over'. It is a bit like the 'big bang' development of the universe. First the middle, strongest and most resonant sounds are explored, then the edges are expanded; composers pushing out constantly to the edges of register, to the peripheral sounds of whispers and grittiness. Sometimes whole pieces are made solely from outermost edges: I think of a piece for piano by Michael Finnissy (**Grainger**). It takes place entirely in the top octave and bottom octave of the piano — the player stretched out to the limits of reach, to the limits of the known keyboard. Sometimes whole concerts take place at the edges of the sounds made by an instrument, particularly when an adventurous player, willing to explore new methods of sound production, attracts new pieces. There are times when one longs for a 'normal' sound in the middle range! — probably an element of bad programme-planning here. I have no doubt that there are plenty of new exciting sounds still to be found on pianos and violins: developments with electronics, still new methods of production. (That is the amazing thing about the standard instruments of the 'classical' tradition — the extent to which they have been able to expand and develop, meeting the demands of so many composers with quite different aims.)

But for the moment, I would like to turn away from the traditional instruments to find this 'new sound' I am seeking. It would be fun to explore some of the 'folk' instruments: mandolin, accordion, bagpipes, guitar, panpipes . . . Away from traditional instruments one comes very quickly against limits — much more constricting limits than in the already expanded classical instruments. Perhaps these other instruments will expand too, but there can be practical difficulties. Take the Northumbrian Smallpipes. A lovely sound! It plays 13 notes of the scale of G major, with an extra C# and D#. Just 15 notes.

The possibility of developing further chromaticism is limited, because at some stage of its development the chanter changed from an open-ended pipe where you put down a finger or combination of fingers to make a note, to a closed pipe where you keep the fingers down on all the holes and raise a finger to make a note. This leaves only a little finger and a thumb free to manipulate the finger keys, which are used mainly for extending the range beyond the single octave of G major. The advantage gained in this layout is that one can have silence (apart from the drones): i.e. rests and staccato notes which are unavailable on other kinds of bagpipes since the supply of air to the chanter is constant.

Nevertheless, limitations are also a way of stimulating the imagination. I have been trying some note spinning. Stay away from G major and it starts to sound rather Turkish. A bit surprising to find one's note-spinning sounding

Turkish!

I am attracted to the idea of the sound of unusual instruments in unison. Perhaps it is time that simple unison playing could be explored again.

★ ★ ★ ★

People sometimes ask why composers are always in search of new sounds. Perhaps we are also suspected of implied criticism of what has gone before. ("What was good enough for Beethoven" . . . As also: "What was wrong with C major then?")

Why always seek the new? We have to do battle against the inertia of the human mind which is biased towards travelling along known paths in known directions. Ask anyone to think up a bit of music and it so easily comes out as yet another version of the familiar. Even in the great composers' notebooks, this is sometimes true of the first attempts. One's own expectations — like everybody else's, — are formed from the known. Somehow one has to trick the imagination into making a step, seeing a vision outside itself; one has to communicate the excitement, have something to say.

Of course, playing with new sounds does not necessarily mean that a composer has something new to say! But it is one way of stimulating the imagination in a new direction. There are lots of others — combining known patterns into unknown simultaneity or juxtaposition, hearing music from another culture remote in distance or time, using ideas from other art forms, creating a conscious and rigorous grid to **force** the construction out of other moulds (how difficult it was for composers to escape that soft, seductive all-embracing cushion of romantic harmony, and what efforts they made to struggle from its embrace!)

Looking back from a perspective of about 50 years, some of the 'steps' of a composer's imagination, seemingly huge at the time, tend to dwindle. That composer will suddenly seem very well-rooted in the past. But that step, though small, was never inevitable. Out of the million possible directions, that one was taken.

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Unusual instruments in combination: I doubt that I will stay in unison for long! There will be the attraction of 'fraying' the sound, having it not quite unanimous, not quite in focus. There is the possibility of different waves or phases, of varying the amount of difference, of coming together again for rest points. Greater or lesser unanimity; phrasing made of greater or lesser activity; rhythm made of greater or lesser clusters of notes; pulses advancing and retreating: these are recurring ideas.

The first thought is to use the unison sound, the unanimity, to underline the arrival at rest points or cadences. All right — one should jolt oneself out of the first, easy path of the imagination. It has gone down that path before. What about the opposite? Active, energetic unisons meandering away to uneasy uncertainty at the ends of phrases. That would work too. It might change the direction of the piece; which tendency, that of the positive, or the uncertain, is the piece progressing towards?

Difficult to get the sound of bagpipes to go out of focus! That immediately presents a challenge and ideas begin to flow. Of course there are ways . . .

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The first page: everything is implied in it, and it is difficult to get it right. Lately I have taken to re-writing that first page so many times!

I am attracted to the idea of 'construction': subduing the 'material' in order to manipulate sound-objects, imposing order in a kinetic-visual way. 'Structure' becomes 'sculpture', but with the added fascinating ingredient of time.

Then there is the organic, 'start-with-a-seed-and-grow' approach. I can see why I distrust that. It makes it too easy to fall into a received sound world. In the event, one balances both approaches in tandem.

So, in the beginning there is an idea, a plan — partly map, partly seed. It has to be flexible enough to allow things to happen. As one makes progress into the piece, so one constantly returns to the beginning to allow that first page to carry the right implications. Through writing the piece one modifies the original plan, so for a long time there is constant interaction between the plan-in-advance and the piece as it actually emerges.

I suppose the necessity for this interaction arises because one starts with an idea for some suitable ground rules, and also an idea of the piece as a whole. The final reconciliation between these two things requires an 'elegant solution' (to borrow the language of mathematics). I find that the 'solution' needs to be forged anew for each new piece. This means that even a piece of modest scope seems to generate a seemingly disproportionate amount of effort, and also that it is very difficult to tell in advance how long the creation of the piece will take.

When I look over past work, I am sometimes surprised by observing the constant recurrence of certain ideas — almost obsessions. It always seemed to me that I was creating a completely new piece, beginning from scratch each time. The vision of each new piece comes complete with the feeling that it is unique; it carries with it the heady excitement of the new. That is what one tries to convey.

This isn't entirely an illusion. Each solution could have been something else. One exercises choice all along the way.

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I find it odd that so many writers on music sound such a pessimistic note about the future . . . (loss of direction: all paths dried up: complete fragmentation: cul de sac . . .)

It reminds me of the sad thought that came to me when I was about eight years old. I was secretly day-dreaming about becoming a composer (not very hopefully — I knew that composers were German, and that they lived a long time ago). It suddenly seemed that perhaps all the possible combinations of notes had already been written. Surely Bach by himself must have explored every permutation and combination? I started to work it out, and was relieved to find that the possibilities of note following upon note, or combined with other notes were infinite. No doubt I was right to feel humble, and wonder if anyone could say something that Bach hadn't already said, but my pessimism had been rather naively literal.

It is always possible to imagine 'something other'. Almost by definition, only a non-creator can talk about cul-de-sacs.

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When I left Australia in 1968 I went to Holland to study at the Studio of Electronic Music in Utrecht. I was there for a year. Since then I haven't had a chance to work with electronic equipment. It has changed a lot, of course. One of the changes, apart from being more flexible and more 'user-friendly', is the dramatic fall in price. But a reasonably flexible system isn't cheap enough for the individual yet. So the studios are still all in institutions and the thing I have lacked since 1969 is a connection with an institution. This is the great disadvantage of being 'free-lance'. (And it doesn't stop at lack of studios! What about lack of access to a good library, to a full range of music journals, to the stimulation of other musicians . . . ?).

There are plans in Britain to give composers access to University electronic studios during vacations. There is such a scheme in operation in Newcastle. Let's hope that the idea is taken up and extended. One of these days, an opportunity might come up for me. It will have to be close enough to where I live, so that I can continue to be wife and mother. In the meantime. . .

In the meantime, I suppose that what I do is to envisage what isn't possible and then translate it into what is possible.

The period in Utrecht was not wasted. Working with electronics is so different from working with humans and instruments that one is forced to think in a different way. It prompts a lot of self-analysis: what decisions does one make when composing? How are these decisions arrived at? This self-analysis carries over into all the other areas as well.

There are other things which are not always possible: the opportunities for getting performances of ambitious pieces for large forces are strictly limited (i.e. non-existent!). Nevertheless one can say: supposing I had . . . eight horns, 15 double basses and the Albert Hall organ? Six actors, 18 singers, 5 grand pianos and film background? A company of mime-artists, a couple of synthesizers and 12 banjos? The imaginative juices start working. Then it is sometimes possible to **translate**. You sort out the essence of what is different and exciting, which new direction occurred to you. Sometimes you find that the new direction doesn't need 15 double basses for its expression after all. A piece of the vision will fit a more limited place. All that excitement may become distilled into a piece for solo viola. Or into a piece for school orchestra: "no higher than Grade 6 standard; the trumpet player has just left and the cellist only knows 8 notes".

It doesn't always work, but the piece you write is likely to be better than if you started with only limitations in mind. Especially if you started with other pieces for those forces in mind. After a few years the early electronic composers were able to leave their studios and write string quartets.

Of course, limits can also be a powerful stimulant. The ingenuity needed to overcome limitations can suggest other ideas that might not have occurred otherwise: detailed working needs a detailed territory. Come to think of it, the principle of translation works well in reverse. A more ambitious piece can be improved by the kind of intensity and detail that a smaller piece is likely to command.

★ ★ ★ ★

Some of the results of experiments with the outer registers and gritty, unusual sounds, may also be translated back into ordinary notes in the middle registers. (I have tried to do something like this in my flute piece: **Blow flute: answer echoes in antique lands dying***)

★ ★ ★ ★

I have been using the word 'vision'. It is strange that our language doesn't have a word for aural imaginings. All the words, 'revelation', 'insight', even 'imagination' itself, stem from the visual sense. One 'inspiration' is different, and comes from breathing. Is there a linguist who could tell me if any language has an equivalent word based on sound? Why do we lack a word?

Talking of vision and inspiration sounds a little old-fashioned. But those words can, of course, cover anything which stimulates a new direction of thought, including reaction against the idea of composition as 'self-expression'.

Even so, we need a word. Wanted: a word to convey both the vivid, direct experience of music in the mind, and the sense of excitement and discovery. As in 'insight, what about 'insound'?

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All composers get asked about their 'influences', and I find this a difficult question. There are composers I admire

very much, but it doesn't seem to me that my music resembles theirs at all. It is the reactions against, which are more potent!

One of the things I disliked about some of the serial music of the 50's and 60's was the dislocation of register. It seemed to me to be an error of judgement to regard the note 'A' in one register as being the same note as one several octaves away. This is to ignore the context of the note, the effect of its dislocation, and also the effect of tension or lack of tension generated by the sound of a particular register in a particular instrument. (Of course, if the dislocation is really violent and is combined with great speed, the composer might be conveying that the 'A-ness' of the note is not important.)

In any case, this dislike probably influenced my own disposition towards having a system of notes organised in non-repeating octaves. It is an attempt to make each note unique, each register a 'thing-in-itself'.

I also dislike music which comes in short bursts — what I call 'stop-start' music. Or music which is continuous but doesn't move. (I call it 'vibraphone music' because it is often encountered in pieces with pretty textures, written for small ensembles which include a vibraphone). No doubt this is why I am concerned with phrasing, with cadences, with directions.

I am also involved in re-examining rhythm, in a way which will echo these other concerns. I imagine a rhythm which will develop, accumulate — will **move** in a clear direction, will come in waves, will progress in phrases. It will not have a regular metre, but will have a clearly perceptible direction. It will have a kind of 'scale' of pulses.

I go to a lot of concerts in London, and remain constantly curious about what other composers are doing (despite many years of sitting through some pretty pointless stuff!) Occasionally one hears a piece which is superb. In that case, it is unique and unrepeatable. That is why one is not 'influenced' by such a piece. Of more practical interest are the ones which dissatisfy: (why? how could it be improved?) I am often guilty of sitting through a piece while busy re-writing it in my mind. I say 'guilty', because if one is to be fair to the composer — if I were a critic, for instance — it would be inappropriate to judge it because it is not something else. However, I sometimes allow myself at a concert (especially if I am bored) to wear my composer's hat rather than the 'impartial listener' one. I figure that it is alright so long as I don't confuse the two!

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It is difficult to write about music, and it is not often done well. To be too general is not useful; what is interesting is the detail, and the specific applications of a general idea. Yet one really needs the reference of a score, or the memory of a well-known work, to talk about details. Again, I don't find it interesting to write about, or read of, the 'blueprint' of a piece — the composer's solution to the problem of arriving at a flexible map on which to base the piece. What is important is the detail derived from the map. The most important thing is to consider all the choices made by the composer, and ask why they were made and not another. And the second most important thing is to ask: "does it work?"

Perhaps the best comment to make about a piece of music — either one's own or another's — is to make another piece?

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Getting music down on paper presents problems. The first problem is that the notation should not dictate the ideas! One has to thwart the mind from **thinking** in traditional notation, and consequently along beaten paths. I usually devise a short-hand way of jotting down ideas as I think them, and work out later how best to notate them in order to convey them to other people.

The method one chooses for communication is always an uneasy compromise. Making music look conventional

may make it easier for performers and consequently one may get a better performance. On the other hand it may disguise the real priorities of the piece and cloud the understanding of the performer. Finding a reasonable compromise would be much easier if one didn't have to assume that there might be only one rehearsal. Or to assume that the players will greet any unconventionality in notation with the idea that the composer is in urgent need of some basic training in the 'rudiments'!

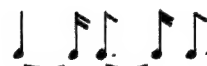
It is always a good idea to ask why a composer writes down a piece in a particular way. To investigate the reason for the notation (assuming that they are not all dictated by the practical considerations just mentioned!) is a good way of discovering the piece. Sometimes, however, one gets the feeling that the 'why' is being asked in the same tone of voice that my children use when they are told to go to bed, clean their teeth, pick up their clothes . . . It can express reluctance rather than genuine enquiry!

An unconventional notation can be a way of putting out signs to show what is relatively important or not important in a piece. In my string quintet, **Ravelation** (UE) some of the patterns of quicker notes are written with much smaller noteheads, and without accidentals. It is requested that these be played in microtones, according to their approximate position on the stave, and that the pattern of notes be followed. It seemed to me that if I had written exact pitch values in microtones, the players would be concentrating very hard on getting the pitch right (pitch being a priority that players expect to be important — and, indeed, one hopes that they get it right when one does notate it precisely!), whereas I wanted their attention to be concentrated on the patterns and the way they were changing and progressing.

The danger of this notation occurs if the players assume that if the pitch is not precise, neither is anything else meant to be. In fact, better results are sometimes achieved if the players are stretched in all directions at once! At least a fearsome-looking score is signalling: lots of effort needed!

However, it is the understanding of the players which one is always trying to reach. The most disturbing performances are the ones where the notes are correct, but they don't weld into a coherent order. One sometimes uses barlines to help keep players together, and to make the score easier to scan visually, but how does one prevent the insidious subtle effects of the barlines on the players' interpretation? I would like to see a return to the practice of performing old vocal music from unbarred individual parts. Such a notation would surely enhance the singers' grasp of the **meaning** of the rhythm?

In some of my pieces I want to ask performers not to think in terms of an underlying beat, but in terms of an accumulation of a smaller pulse, such as semiquavers. Supposing I want a note worth five semiquavers to be followed by one worth four, and then three. If I write:



the assumption of an underlying crotchet beat will intrude a misconception into the performance: an unwanted tension at the end of the first note, a slight accent on the second, and so on. In any case the effect is fussy-looking and the meaning confusingly disguised. If I write:



or even



in order to counteract the idea of crotchets, I am likely to get the score back "corrected" by the player. Context will often aid understanding, but one needs players prepared to read and interpret notation in more than one way, in order to respond appropriately.

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Music is sometimes talked of as an 'abstract' art — especially if it is compared with literature (which has a subject matter plainly portraying people and things, as well as thoughts, structure, etc.), and painting (which nearly always has the subject matter of the 'real world', albeit interpreted through the artist's vision). People find difficulty 'placing' music and sometimes put it into the completely-abstract pigeonhole. Music is, of course, 'about' sounds. There is nothing abstract about sounds. They are part of the real world!

There is also nothing abstract about the heart beat, about breathing, about muscle tension. Music is "about" these things too, and it would be interesting if music analysis ceased to ignore the connection between music and physical response.

Most tempo markings, for instance, give a beat somewhere between about 50 and 150. My orchestral piece **Chant with Garlands** (UE) starts at a rather impractical 24, and conductors have found difficulty in connecting one beat with the next. I understand that if the human pulse rate drops below about 40 doctors get concerned, since below that, the heart is likely to stall and give out!

Phrase length, of course, has always been connected with the breath, as in singing, but apart from that, it surely affects listeners as well. If the length of phrase constantly counteracts one's own pacing of the inhale-exhale cycle, I can't be the only person who reacts with a feeling of distress and disturbance? Too many very short phrases tend to make one irritable or even start gasping, as in the "stop-start" music mentioned earlier, or in Ravel's **Daphnis and Chloe** (surely a misjudgement by the composer?). Very continuous music can make one feel an oppression of the lungs and bodily tension, as in Baroque music played very fast by a soloist using circular breathing; or in very dense music which has no relaxation points.

These things have always been used by composers, whether consciously or instinctively, to induce feelings of relaxed naturalness, or deliberate disturbance. Take the effect on muscular tension of the structural cliché used in every drawing room ballade (and in lots of great music too!): the first section consists of a calm 'beautiful' tune in smooth phrases; this is followed by a contrasting passionate bit — faster phrases more broken or irregular, modulation to more remote keys; then the first section is repeated, its effect perceptively different from the first time round, because of the much greater feeling of muscular relaxation (the muscular response being **manipulated** by the composer).

It might be interesting for people to become more conscious of their instinctive responses to music. Maybe composers would be less likely to introduce accidental bodily responses which are not appropriate to what they want to convey. Maybe audiences would become more aware, more actively participating.

Following along these lines I would like to work with physical movement allied with music. Perhaps this would be a good way to make my ideas of rhythm more explicit, to help signal the things of which one wants the audience to be most aware. It would be interesting to work with dancers, although what I have in mind is not so much connected with **strenuous** movement, as movement which makes explicit the progression from tension to relaxation — maybe in slow-ish stylised gestures. The disadvantage of having an externalised, visible world is that unless the marriage between the two is a particularly happy one, the extra elements can contradict and distract, rather than reinforce the musical world. The aim is for the individuals in the audience to each make explicit, in their own responses, the movement of the music.

Another idea I have in mind would use images on a screen (perhaps a television screen). This would involve patterns of **things** moving rather than people: a kind of 'image-concrete'.

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When words are connected with music they can also help to elicit appropriate responses, although there are problems too. One problem is whether the words can be clearly heard; another is that poems and stories tend to have a lot of connecting details, necessary in conveying literary meaning, but sometimes ill-matched with musical preoccupations. In opera one tends to get a whole pot-pourri of conflicting preoccupations: acting, staging, lighting, producer ego-trips and the like. And in opera one encounters another difficulty: that of a vocal technique which is developed primarily to achieve the resonance needed to fill a huge auditorium and compete with full orchestra. The resulting wide note band with conflicting overtones tends to sacrifice any clear impression of pitch. (And if someone is roaring at the full strength of their lungs, surely the appropriate response is fright?)

Nevertheless I enjoy using voices. I would like to explore further the grey area between singing and speaking (as I have done to some extent in **Letter from Haworth**), although I feel strongly that one cannot move abruptly from one to the other without careful handling. If the musical style or the context means that the words may not come over clearly, one solution is to choose words which are already known. Another idea might be to set the words simply, and then move on to a more complex musical style, while re-iterating key words only.

In my piece **Voice of the Shades** (UE) I have used made-up words. The music begins with a very limited number of notes, and the words also contain a limited set of vowel sounds and consonants. As the music expands and develops the words also do so, in a way which closely mirrors the musical processes. As a method of working it was perhaps unusual, in that the music was made first and the words fitted after. The disadvantage was that the words took longer to write than the music!

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I like to think that much of my music can be played by 'ordinary' performers, not necessarily by virtuosos who specialize in contemporary music. But how does one reach them? Only a few stalwart and dedicated performers are prepared to descend on a publisher, bypass the showroom, penetrate the inner recesses where the contemporary scores are kept, and ask to view a specific score which the rest of the world has no idea exists.

I won't go into the various practical frustrations which face the composer! These are all part of the job — perhaps inevitable. Only a few people will be prepared to follow when a composer steps off the edge of the known and familiar — until that bit of discovered territory is known and familiar in its turn.

There is no profit in living music. Nevertheless, although one appreciates that performers, publishers, broadcasters, and university and school music departments are not rolling in the fat of the land, they are all existing on music which is free. It is impossible to pay back our debts to composers of the past. Perhaps some of this debt, which we all owe, should be invested in the future?

★ ★ ★ ★

One day I would like to write that piece for 15 double basses.

"I shall go — unleashed, unpegged" (Sappho).

* The solo flute piece **Blow flute: answer echoes in antique lands dying**, is included on the accompanying NMA Tape 4.

Whirlies, Whirliworks and Singing Stunters

Sarah Hopkins

*Whirlies
pure sound
music not far removed
from the heart or ear
responsible to by everyone.*

Whirlies are musical instruments produced from swimming pool hosing of various lengths and diameters. Unlike their close 'relatives', the commercially made 'blugals', 'plastic audio sports pipes' and 'dolphin callers' the whirlies can be precisely tuned and played in a wide variety of melodic and percussive ways. The basic playing technique involves whirling the instruments through the air at various speeds. As one increases speed the pitch rises through the harmonic series providing an average of five separate notes.

I was first introduced to the whirly concept in 1982 when given a 'blugal'. I loved the purity of its sound, the physicality required in playing the instrument and its ready accessibility. I decided to make my own whirlies and began experimenting with different lengths and diameters of swimming pool hosing. The quality and variety of these 'home grown' whirlies far surpassed the commercially made equivalents, and by mid 1983 I had built up a large range of 'little' and 'deep' whirlies which I was using in many different contexts, including exploratory music workshops, community music projects, plus solo, collaborative and ensemble performance pieces.

Playing techniques included basic whirling plus rubbing, scraping or hitting corrugation against corrugation; hitting the palm of the hand over one end; 'snaking' them on the floor; blowing through them didjeridu style and singing or talking through them whilst whirling.

An ensemble work which incorporates many of these techniques is **Sunrise/Sunset: A Whirly Soundscape** composed in 1983 for a team of artists to perform for children in isolated Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

In 1984 I formed the **Darwin Whirliworks Ensemble**; a group of six musicians with widely differing musical backgrounds (folk, jazz, classical and contemporary). The ensemble's aim was to explore and experiment with many forms of composition for whirlies, culminating in a public performance of original material. The success of this performance led to the release of a **Whirliworks** audio cassette¹. **Interweave**² is one of the works I composed for the ensemble. It is notated as a prose score with technical directions.

Both **Sunrise/Sunset** and **Interweave** are highly structured improvisations. I favour this form of composition which enables crystallisation of a skeletal framework and content. This allows freedom for the performers to make the piece their own whilst demanding that they be 'in the moment', interacting and creating as they rehearse and perform. Most of my compositional work follows this principle.

I enjoy collaborative composing-performing work enormously and find the resulting fusion of musical



instruments, vocabularies and forms to be really exciting. Working as a composer-performer and community artist on many different projects I often find interesting cross-fertilisations occurring. This was the case in February 1985 with **Whirlies and Soundkites**. The Singing Stunter was born! It is a dual control soundkite constructed from sail cloth and fibre glass with a whirly spine. It sings out loud and clear as the kite soars, loops and dives. Wonderful sky songs are created through flying several differently tuned Singing Stunters together!

*Whirlies
Whirliworks
and Singing Stunters
wind music
for land and sky.*

¹ The **Whirliworks** cassette is part of the **Soundworks** cassette trilogy.

² A recording of **Interweave** accompanies this article on NMTape4.

"SUNRISE/SUNSET" : WHIRLY SOUNDSCAPE

- for 6 players & 6 precisely tuned little whirlyies.

(Approximate timing 7 mins.)

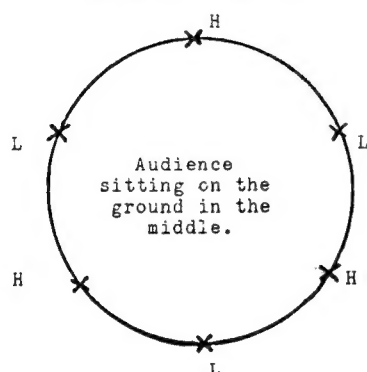
Composed for the Brown's Mart KIDS CONVOY TEAM to perform for kids in isolated aboriginal communities.

WHIRLY TUNINGS

- Two tunings, a semitone apart
- 3 whirlyies tuned to Eb, marked L (Low)
- 3 whirlyies tuned to Eb, marked H (High)



ENSEMBLE & AUDIENCE PLACEMENTS

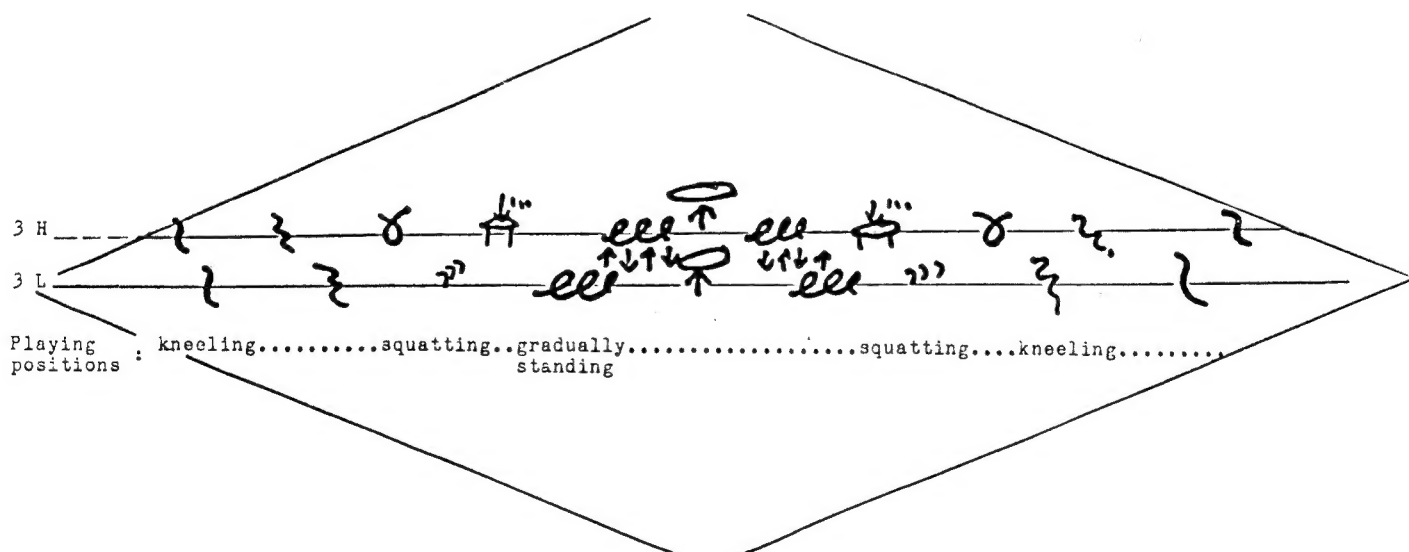


NOTATIONAL EXPLANATIONS

- SNAKE = 'snaking' the whirly on the ground into the centre of the circle.
- Faster, more active 'snaking'.
- MOZZIE= fast rubbing of whirly corrugations together (changes of speed etc)
- FROG I = scraping solid end of whirly on other ends corrugations (3+ corrugations per time)
- FROG II= hitting palm of hand over solid end of whirly.
- Normal 'whirling', using full harmonic series.
- Fast whirling above head (helicopter style 1)

REHEARSAL & PERFORMANCE NOTES

'Real-time' relating & reacting to one another (across & around the circle) is essential in this piece. Keep close contact! Sense the overall flow & dynamic of the piece, yet always remain 'in the moment' - listening to one another & placing your sounds sensitively within the overall SUNRISE/SUNSET SOUNDSCAPE.



"INTERWEAVE" : WHIRLY FABRIC

- for 6 players & 6 precisely tuned "deep whirlies"

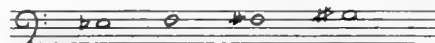
ONE BY ONE, AS WITH SINGLE THREADS, WEAVE TOGETHER.
NURTURE YOUR SOUNDS TO THEIR FULL VIBRATING SUSTAINS.
LISTEN ALWAYS & WORK WITH THE LIVE FABRIC DESIGN,
(GENTLY) INTERWEAVING YOUR SOUND THREADS.

ALLOW THE FABRIC BREATHING SPACE -
BUT DON'T LET ALL THE THREADS CEASE "SINGING"
UNTIL THE SOUND FABRIC IS COMPLETE.

.....
BANDS OF SOUND COLOUR.
INTERWEAVING LINES -
A WHIRLY SOUNDPILE !
.....

DEEP WHIRLY TUNINGS

Six whirlies tuned to four basic tunings



- 2 whirlies tuned to E^b - taking in (E^b) C⁴ (E^b)
- 1 whirly tuned to F - taking in (F) (E^b) D
- 2 whirlies tuned to F[#] - taking in (F[#]) (E^b) (C⁴)
- 1 whirly tuned to G[#] - taking in (G[#]) (C⁴) F⁴

The circled notes above indicate the specified notes to be used.

TECHNICAL & STRUCTURAL NOTES

- 1) Each player is restricted to using their whirly's specified pitches (as circled above)
- 2) Each player must have absolute control of the sounds plus ability for long sustains of their pitches
- 3) The piece includes a wide textural range - from isolated pitches to sustained & shifting chords & clusters. Explore 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 pitches at a time
- 4) Try including silence whilst sustaining the concentration on the fabric of the piece.
- 5) Through regular practice the piece will grow & develop... It has its own life, so allow that to develop !

© SARAH HOPKINS : APRIL 1984 DARWIN, AUSTRALIA.



Gillian Whitehead in Discussion with Noel Sanders

N.S. *Looking at the pieces you have written, one can not help but be surprised by the number of music theatre pieces. Do you find that those works are really important for you, that you lead up to them with other works and that they feed other works?*

G.W. No, I don't know whether I see it entirely that way. Maybe that's the way it works in practice, but it seems to me it was quite a long time before I started writing music theatre pieces anyway, and when I did start writing them I was writing them more as contrast — contrast to the purely abstract, instrumental pieces that I had been writing up to that time. In the music theatre pieces I was taking perhaps all the techniques I was using in the abstract pieces, but using them for totally different ends, for the expression of the drama or whatever it might be.

N.S. *One of the major pieces of work in that genre which you have been working on is a series of pieces based on the life and tribulations of Eleanor of Aquitaine. What did Eleanor's life and her history and the history of the times mean to you in the context of your own work?*

G.W. Well it might be difficult to talk about in the context of my own work! I conceived that piece for a particular singer who wanted a piece based on a historical character. I was working at the time with a writer, Fleur Adcock, and she was interested in the translating of troubador songs. We started thinking about it and, from there, the first piece I wrote was an orchestral piece — a piece for the singer and orchestra based on Eleanor of Aquitaine. She was such a fascinating character that it was possible to build up a whole opera around her. I think I've always been drawn to the Medieval period. People like Dufay interested me very early on. Also the way of life, the symbolism, say in painting . . . a whole tangible world. Somehow everything has a kind of wholeness at that stage that later breaks into a whole lot of other directions . . . those are two of the reasons.

N.S. *The pre-Renaissance world is really important for you as a sort of quarry for a bunch of texts and world views, etc. It really corresponds, for you, to a way you work as a musician. When you talk about the inter-relationship of parts and things fitting together as a whole, it suggests, say, medieval techniques, harmonic and musical techniques available at that time, that seem to come through in your music in a kind of frozen passion, a frozen controlled fury that's in quite a lot of your pieces — something likewise true of the medieval world.*

G.W. Your perception is possibly accurate. It's hard for me to know. Certainly I base certain techniques on extensions of Medieval and Renaissance practices — polyphonic rather than harmonic.

N.S. *I'd like to ask you about your moves around the world, and the way you think of the world and various parts of it you've inhabited. You started off in New Zealand and spent some time in Sydney and then a lot of time in England, mostly in island places — remote places. Did you feel they were transpositions of antipodean experiences and places that, by going back, would yield a consciousness of our antipodean-ness?*

G.W. Sure. Growing up in New Zealand, or wherever you spend the first twenty years of your life, must make a strong

impression on anybody. Beyond that you can either throw it away and forget it, or leave it for a while and it comes up in different ways. When I was living in Europe, mainly England, for a while the places I lived in were basically urban — London, Lisbon, Rome. Living in those places I was working with material in a certain way. Then I started spending a lot of time in Orkney and the north of England — remote places — and, to a large extent, a lot of reasons I was drawn to Orkney, the islands, were to do with New Zealand, to do with islands. I found that while I was living there my sound world changed. Not living in an urban society the sounds around me were all natural sounds, and I found that there were certain things I had been writing that I couldn't use any more, that I didn't want to use anymore. Things somehow became a lot simpler — in pieces like *Hotspur*, for instance, which was written in the north of England. I was writing it living in Northumberland. It's about *Hotspur*, who was Henry Percy, the Duke of Northumberland. The Battle of Otterburn happened in 1388, and I was living in the country, fairly close to where the battle took place. Hearing the music afterwards a lot of the natural sounds seem somehow to have got into the music. It wasn't that one was consciously sitting down and writing 'natural sounds'; it is something to do with living there. You would have found this in the battle: the ground is teacherous there. Fighting in that area, with its vast expanses of boggy ground, the chances of a swordsman tripping over rabbit-holes or something would have been as much of a danger as being struck by a sword . . . and the sounds, you're so aware of the sounds, of the wind, the birds and that pattern of light. And the same with living in Orkney . . . the intensity of light in winter when you look to the south, and the sun is very low to the horizon . . . Yet the intensity of that light is something you'd rarely see, except maybe in the south of New Zealand, and all those kinds of things somehow play on what you're writing . . .

N.S. *This really meant a big change for your way of thinking. You seem to have been a natural historian from that time onwards, very much free to record day-to-day things, much more receptive to those things getting into the music, whether they be hearing birds, windcalls or seeing light. You seem to have found ways to represent that in musical terms, without it being impressionistic in any sort of way — a more diaristic way if anything.*

G.W. It is not something I do consciously, but I have moved away from the cities, and my music changed from that point. But at the same time it was while I was living in the cities that I was building up a technique I could work with . . . it takes a long time to build up a technique — though the change might have happened anyway. I think it took me fifteen years to build up a technique that I could then control rather than it controlling me, and from having built it up it seems that, thereafter, I've been working on its simplification.

N.S. *Could you expand a bit more on that and say what the aspects of your technical world are and what that technique is in practice.*

G.W. Well I'll try. A lot of what I was doing was based on canon and canonic extension, mensural canon. I think I wrote only one piece you would actually call 12 tone, but I worked a lot in the late 60's, early 70's, with sets,

permutations, that sort of thing. Pitch, everything was controlled, although it would be hard for anyone to chart the course of what was happening. Then at one stage I found one of those magic squares: 1 to 36, arranged so you have six numbers horizontally and six vertically, so you have a square where all the horizontals/verticals/diagonals all add up to the same number. I was looking at that to see if I could do anything with it, and started working and found, in fact, that I had something that really, I suppose, for the rest of my time in Europe, was the basis of what I was doing. I used it initially in fairly complex ways, taking the proportions or whatever it was that I got out of it, and applying it to a modular to change the proportions so that the mathematical calculations were really quite complex. I realised it was then possible to work with it in a simpler way, so you had aspects of complexity, and also complementary or much freer semi-improvisatory aspects, as in *La Cadenza Sia Corta*, where you have areas that, as far as dynamics and pitch and rhythm are concerned are really very calculated. And before, during and after those islands of calculation, you've got a much freer use of what is virtually the same material, joined and treated in a much more improvisatory way, although it is in fact as precise as the obviously strict sections.

N.S. *It's pretty clear that choosing those mantric or rebus forms to work with cues you into a musical labyrinth, that the process of revelation, the process of spinning out a piece becomes the working out of a quasi-magical process. I was wondering in what ways music, to you, has that magical-mantral side to it, and how that relates to the way musicians work, generally speaking, within the society, as trying to reveal something which is at loggerheads with the normal, rationalised trajectories of the society in general. What do you feel about working in those ways which, literally, are not ways which have a living function within the current mode of production, but are, rather, vestigial to them. Does that produce, for you, a viable form of marginal work that allows you to comment on the society or undermine it or subvert some of its rationalised trajectories? In other words, in what way does the magical or ritualistic mode of approaching music work for you?*

G.W. It's something I find hard to put into words, though what you say makes a great deal of sense to me. I'd say, perhaps, there are manifestations in certain pieces. For instance, a piece I wrote called *Marduk* which was conceived as a theatre piece for dance — for various reasons it finished up being done in concert version only. The scenario was very much to do with being on the edge of a great ritual which you could see part of but not totally understand. The main protagonist in the piece was trying to understand it. You had 4 giant god figures as well as 4 figures in black, slightly larger than lifesize, who functioned as the acolytes of those god figures. Then there was the protagonist and the relationship of the protagonist to the god figure . . . They were doing a ritual, and the protagonist would react to that, but there was no interaction with the acolytes of the god figures. They were in a position of mockery to the protagonist. It had to do with understanding and not understanding . . . it's a theme difficult to put into words but it is one which works throughout a lot of pieces. For example, the earliest manifestation of it was in *Babel*; it has a massive 40 minute first section for three, eight part choirs and orchestra. I took the idea of building the tower of Babel with a Hebrew base and a superstructure in lots of other languages. It includes a text I used which Randolph Stow wrote for me and which I've used very recently in a piece for the 'Song Company' and Synergy'. In that piece you have a story told in lots of different languages, using single words or phrases; a lot of them are American Indian or African languages . . . I mean, all translated into one language they make sense, but in their other languages they don't make sense at all. It seems to me it's something I've just come to realise — that area of understanding something and not understanding. It is something I've been exploring a lot in pieces.

N.S. *So that goes back to what you were saying about*

the inter-connections and the inter-penetration of various parts of the Medieval world. In one sense, in a theological sense, the world was totally inexplicable . . .

G.W. . . . perhaps . . .

N.S. *I mean in terms of dogma and theology it was totally inexplicable . . .*

G.W. Yes, yes . . .

N.S. . . . So, at the same time it was overlain by a complete sense of catastrophe and lack of understanding and the normal sort of frenzy of alienation that is supposed to be attributable to the Medieval mind. So the protagonist in *Marduk* or *Eleanor* are people who stand in awe of their own ignorance about where they are going and how they are isolated, but at the same time they are working within a world which, in one sense, is quite rational and understandable.

G.W. Yes.

N.S. *We might look at that idea of isolation, because it seems to combine several things that seem to be coming together, like islands, the paradoxical position of women within a masculinised series of practices which she calls her 'art music' in the twentieth century, and that whole choice of remote histories, remote times and remote geographical locations. Maybe these are tied in with the way you see yourself working within this highly organised field. You seem to have devised a series of stratagems for moving outwards, for establishing positions outwards in time and place from which to look at the centrality of, say, urbanised male culture, twentieth century capitalist culture, whatever, by choosing either modes of production or thinking that are contradictory to those.*

G.W. Yes, that could well be. It's not something I've thought about in those terms — I'd have to think about it for a week.

N.S. *I was thinking of works like *Wulf* which is about one person being on one island and another person being hopelessly apart from them on a different island. To each one the whole island where they live is their whole world, but it's not where the other is, and so consequently they're in this schizophrenic state of mind. Likewise, in another work you've recently done — the opera called *The King of the Other country* — there is that notion of the other country as the descent into hell, or visitations from another world, which is the complete other of where one is, and likely to upset everything that one is.*

G.W. Yes, which is also very like the opera which I'm now working on — it is very much in the same area again. It's a sort of a science-fiction to do with cyclical time, and again, it's about people from this world confronting another world which is, maybe, in the future or maybe parallel or interior — it doesn't matter — and the exploration, the effect these two worlds are having on one another. It's a sixty or ninety minute opera I'm writing for Auckland, but the feeling is that I will be writing something longer than sixty minutes because it opens something up — so many areas. Anyway we will see what happens with it . . .

N.S. *I was asking you about the use of harmony, polyphony and canonic procedures in music. Then I asked you what happens when these sorts of procedures are used quite consciously, as in the work of Peter Maxwell Davies, to produce some sort of alienation effect in the music, some sort of strangeness. This can be a scary thing, with plain chant and very minimal intervallic movements — very slow moving — coming into a world of frenzy, dispersion and explosion, and producing a weird tension between the old, the pre-capitalist, and the late capitalist, as it were. How does this sort of thing find its way into your music, if it does at all and/or how is it transformed in your music?*

G.W. Well, in fact I very rarely use that type of procedure at all. I don't use borrowed material at all. I can probably think of only three pieces when I've done something like that.

N.S. *Used plain-chant or . . .*

G.W. No, I meant that I only used plain chant once, in a ballet score for voice and organ — a Requiem, where I set the 'Dies Irae'. There's one passage where I was working with permutations, and right at the end I state what is being permuted and it is an obvious quotation from the 'Dies Irae'.

N.S. Right. You come to know something you've already been listening to, but didn't know that's what you were listening to.

G.W. Yes, yes. That is what underlies the structure of that movement, where I use that particular effect. And again in a piece based on Katherine Mansfield, **Out of this nettle danger**, which will be performed soon in Sydney. She wrote this dark, strange poem, very bitter against her husband: "Someone came to me and said forget, forget that we'd been wed", and so on. The "someone" she's talking about is Death and I've used the harmonic structure of Schubert's **Death and the Maiden**, and again, it's only right at the end that I have a short quotation. It's only about six chords and everyone who knows it will get the reference. I think those are probably the only times I've quoted anything that I can remember. But I certainly haven't used it the way Maxwell Davies takes a piece of, say, plainsong and the use of that permeates the whole piece.

N.S. Gillian, one of the pieces I've heard over the years, of yours, that most impressed me was a piece called **Ahotu**, which was performed by Flederman in 1984. I think you wrote it after the death of your father. Is that right?

G.W. That's right. I was working on the piece — I had written a certain amount of it and I was in the middle of it. He was ill at the time and when he died one of the last things he asked me was to go and see if I could find some . . . he wanted to taste a bit of fish — just a touch. It was Sunday and I went out and, of course, all the delicatessens were shut, so I had to come back and say "I'm sorry". It was only later that I realised that this was a Maori custom: before you die you eat just a touch of some food to sustain you on the journey to the Underworld, and I didn't know about that. I don't know whether he knew it either, but I felt that I hadn't been able to do what he asked, and so I thought, well, this is what this piece must be. The 'omatenga', is the name of the food which sustains you on the journey back to the homeland.

N.S. Right.

G.W. So, first of all I reworked the piece to that stage — it didn't require much reworking — and then wrote the rest of the piece. The actual work I would have called **O** — a single letter — but I couldn't call it that because Lyell Cresswell had called a piece of his **O**. It would have been abstruse to have two pieces called **O** for different reasons by two N.Z. composers, and we'd already accidentally

called pieces by the same name: we'd both written a piece called **Aria** in the sense of its Maori meaning.

N.S. Right, so there's that theme again of the descent into the underworld or a progression across the sea to an island or somewhere off the mainland, away from the place you invoke as a position from which to write. I brought up that question of **Ahotu (Omatenga)** because my experience of listening to your pieces is of a very slow journey, and I think of them having a geographical feel to them, a sense of place — which is paradoxical for an art that takes place in time. There is a sense of place and of moving through the pieces so that sometimes, perhaps a third or halfway into a piece, one might find one has left a landscape — very gradually, not with a great move or lurch, or a conscious sort of movement. One has slowly progressed, say, from foothills to high country or from a coastal region into an interior without it being immediately perceptible, and to me this gives not only that spatial feeling of movement, but also the pleasure of being able to think through the music. This is something that Adorno held dear and decreed had been lost — the whole business of being able to follow the sound world through, think it through, so that music could be a cognitive form of process. Do you feel that is an aspect of your music? Maybe it's not a question you can answer by saying, "that's the way I hear my music", but maybe you could relate this to the way you actually write your music.

G.W. Yes, I can. Actually, I often set up a process; that is something I did in **Ahotu**, but I've done it in lots of pieces. When I was working with those magic squares, I would set a process up and then contradict it. The first time I did it was in the opera **Tristram and Iseult** — actually, in the love duet near the beginning. I would set something up so that it was subconsciously or unconsciously going in a certain direction. When it reaches a certain point the direction changes — it may continue at twice the length or at half the speed — so the subconscious expectation is different from what actually happens. I know that happened in **Ahotu**. In a passage near the middle there are events, or certain pitches, that generate certain sorts of material over quite a large expanse of time, and at a certain point that comes to a close and the original material comes back in other forms. The last time it comes back it's just a series of pitches, whereas at the beginning of the section the pitches were generating at least a content of a bar, or even five or six bars. At the end those pitches are part of a canonic procedure; they are proceeding just as quavers so that the rhythms and elaborations have disappeared, and it is only a series of short, very fast pitches. The entire procedure is suggested at the beginning of the section, but by the time it's underway, the expectations are changed — it comes back in different forms.

NMATAPES 4

The cassette accompanying this issue of NMA magazine is now available, featuring:

Ros Bandt	Excerpt from Genesis
Jennifer Fowler	Blow Flute: answer echoes in antique lands dying.
Wendy Hiscocks	Excerpt from Peace and Nuclear War in the Australian Landscape
Sarah Hopkins	Interweave

Cindy John	Disarray
Vineta Lagzdina	The Black Snake
Annea Lockwood	Shadow Burn
Kay Morton	Grin and Gesture
Catherine Schieve	Excerpt from Web
Caroline Wilkins	Physarmonica
Barbara Woof	Maldoror

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Three Works: 1983 - 1985

Barbara Woof

Writing for one instrument highlights many of the problems of composition. Ensemble music can often be a compromise between a compositional idea and having the instruments available that can convey that idea satisfactorily. With many instruments it is easy to create 'sound worlds' pleasing in themselves, but which often mask a basic structural weakness. With one instrument, however when it stops there is silence. One has to compose **through** the silences; the 'sound world' can only be made from that one instrument. One must analyse its fundamental qualities in order to write a music that belongs to it alone.

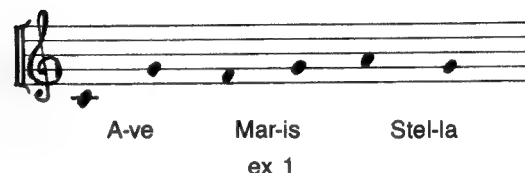
Of the three works under discussion, two, **Maldoror** and **Caoine**, are for solo instruments. **Sciamachy** is for two guitars, but this piece was approached in a similar way to the other two.

Maldoror resulted from reading the epic prose poem **Les Chants de Maldoror** by the 19th century French poet Lautréamont. The language of this work made a very deep impression upon me; it is highly charged with emotion, full of fantasy and colourful description and yet stridently direct in approach.

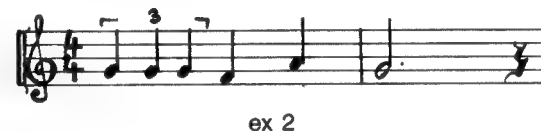
In **Les Chants de Maldoror**, Lautréamont seeks to break apart the traditional mannerisms and content of the poetry of his time. Today in art, there is no single style to be torn down nor to be built up; one's fight must be against an easy evaluation of any kind of art on the basis of its 'belonging' to a style. Its acceptance must be based on intelligent listening, looking etc. and not on dogmatic appraisals of what its function should be.

material was developed. Since this chant begins with a rising perfect fifth, what better instrument than the violin?

Only the opening phrase of the chant is used:



The perfect 5th permeates the whole composition and the following motif,



recurs as a refrain.

The work opens with a bare 5th, the beginning of the language of the violin, open strings, no vibrato. The first phrase is created through the introduction of pairs of perfect fifths: A-E, Bb-F, G-D, Eb-Bb. Their superimpositions produce various other intervals, notably the major 2nd, minor 2nd, major 3rd and augmented 4th which dominate the composition as a whole:

MALDOROR

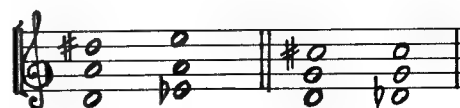


My ideal is to produce a composition which is unified in concept but which cannot be placed into a particular mould. A musical language should be developed for each piece in which a range of musical and formal ideas can be used so that through their integration and transformation something can be produced that is at least interesting, and hopefully, unique.

Fortuitously, **Les Chants de Maldoror** provided the musical material for the composition. The first chant uses the formal device of the refrain "Je te salue, vieil océan!" ("Hail to you, old ocean!") which punctuates the end of many stanzas. The salutation is a mocking version of the Catholic tradition of the Greeting of the Virgin Mary. I immediately associated this with the plainchant 'Ave Maris Stella' (Hail Star of the Sea)*, from which the thematic

There is a modal quality to this phrase which is exploited throughout the piece as a means of releasing tension after the, at times, quite violent passages of chromaticism. This is, after all, the function that the perfect 5th has had throughout western music.

The second most important interval in the composition is the augmented 4th, especially when placed above or below the perfect 5th or perfect 4th:



These chords span the major 9th and major 7th, harsh intervals which lend themselves to the powerful and bold expression that I was seeking:

There is no return to this timbral field during the composition. It is an introduction out of which a tightly structured composition emerges.

Violin

marcato

ex 5

At odds with this modern musical language is the formal set-up of the piece, which is essentially theme-and-variations; one senses Bach's **Chaconne** lurking in the shadows. These stylistic allusions however, have no bearing on the **substance** of the composition apart from binding it to what is the essence of the violin. (That this has been achieved is borne out by the comments of the violinist Josje ter Haar, who gave the premiere performance. She could not believe that I had never played the violin and found that, although **Maldoror** was extremely difficult and required much study, it quite naturally 'played itself'.)

Schiamachy, unlike **Maldoror**, has no extra-musical source of inspiration. I was asked to write a work for two classical guitars. This was problematic for me since I liked very little classical guitar music and felt it to be a poor relation to the music from the great players of flamenco and jazz. Furthermore the guitar is limited in dynamic range and in nuances of note-attack. I had considered using a bow, but this is only really beautiful with a metal-stringed guitar.

In contrast to most of the guitar repertoire I was determined to write a moderately long work without resorting to separate movements. Concerts of classical guitar music generally become monotonous from the programming of a string of five to seven minute compositions and an abundance of rather ephemeral 'mood' pieces which do not provide much intellectual stimulus.

I experimented with a guitar to discover new timbres and decided to use these textures as a means of contrast against the usual guitar-tone, precisely to enhance and strengthen it. Example 6 shows how sharp attacks emerge out of a surrounding field of noise; the listener therefore focuses on these notes and their intervallic relationships.

The duo itself is used as one, rhythmically interlocking block. **Sciamachy** is shadow-fighting, there is only one attacker!

As the perfect 5th, the tuning of the violin, was fundamental to **Maldoror**, so too, to an even greater extent, has the tuning of the guitar, combined with the wide spacing of its frets, determined the musical material for **Sciamachy**.

The usual guitar tuning, E-A-d-g-b-e', is an advantage to tonal music, but can be a disadvantage to atonal music. Scordatura can create problems for the performers, but, in consultation with the players, the general consensus was that retuning one string, preferably the highest or the lowest could be coped with. I decided that there were sufficient reasons to lower the bottom string on both guitars by a semitone, as well as to tune Guitar 2 one semitone higher overall than Guitar 1. A capodastro can be used on Guitar 2, the part being transposed for the performer.

The tuning for the piece is thus:

Guitar 1 Guitar 2

ex 7

The main reason for retuning was so that complex, non-tonal chords with relatively simple fingerings could be obtained. I chose a few finger positions which gave interesting arrangements of intervals, and then based the whole composition on these and the six-note chords that are produced when these finger positions are moved along the fretboard.

Guitar 1

Guitar 2

ex 8

Handwritten musical score for guitar, featuring various techniques like vibrato, trills, and harmonics. The score is written on multiple staves with detailed annotations.

A further product of this tuning was that it provided a wide variety of harmonics. Harmonics are important to guitar technique. They yield a different timbre and will still

ex 6 resonate when one's finger is removed from the string. Therefore it is possible to sustain a melody line using harmonics, whilst other, more complex lines can be woven around it.

CAOINE

Alto Saxophone
in Eb

* grace notes always to be played as fast as possible, to be heard really as an articulation of the main note.
* accidentals apply only to the note that follows

Handwritten musical score for Alto Saxophone in Eb, featuring various techniques like grace notes, articulation, and dynamics. The score is written on multiple staves with detailed annotations.

ex 9

It is difficult to describe exactly what occurs in the composition; its strength lies in the proportions of its structure and in the transformations of the material (apart of course, from the beauty and complexity of its timbres and chords).

The work can be divided in two parts. The first part is a continuous metamorphosis of the material out of the opening area of non-rhythmic, indefinite pitch through single notes to a simple arpeggio movement; a-metric rhythms are then introduced which creates contrapuntal movement. The further segregation of accented chords and melodic movement leads to a break up in texture and one is left with chord agglomerations interspersed with silence.

The second part is concerned with rebuilding the music from this nadir, primarily through the development of rhythmic structures. This reaches a climax at which a single melodic line emerges. After this follows a coda consisting of contrasting segments of sforzato chordal structures and counterpoints woven about a melody of harmonics.

Harmony has a very strong function in both of the pieces so far discussed. I have only grappled fully with the concept of the solo as one single melodic line with the work for saxophone, the most recent of the three.

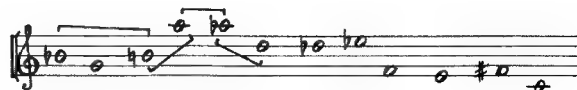
I wanted to create a lyrically expressive work, with the raw desperateness that the title **Caoine**, the Gaelic word for keening, implies. The saxophone is most suited for this, possessing a wide gamut of expressive qualities.

In the music there is little connection with Gaelic folk music. There is however one principle, found generally in bagpipe music, which provides a basis for the composition. This is the use of ornaments to give an effect of articulation to what otherwise, on the bagpipe, is a continuous flow of tone. The saxophone player can, of course, articulate with the tongue, and the contrast between these two forms of rhythmic articulation is crucial to the music's development.

As can be seen in the opening, ornaments are used for the rhythmic articulation of the note B. The ornaments are gradually expanded to larger and more complex patterns, tension builds up and dramatic force is given to each change of the melody note: Bb to G, measure 16; G to Bb, measure 20.

Multiphonics are similarly used to articulate a note and as timbral 'ornamentation'.

The main theme is built around the following series:



ex 10

The bracketed intervals form the basic material for melodic development. The theme is only gradually evolved however, its final form not appearing until nearly two-thirds of the way into the piece.

The composition is rhapsodic in nature; the theme is characterized by long, repeated notes broken by rapid ornamental figures. Passages where the theme is developed are alternated with episodes which explore the interaction between ornament and melody — how one grows into and out of the other, through rhythmic development.

These three compositions represent a period of consolidation of my ideas and my development as a composer. The challenge now is to extend what I have achieved into larger-scale works.

* This plainchant has been a musical obsession of the composer Peter Maxwell-Davies, whose work I admire. This provided a further incentive to make reference to the chant, as my own 'musical offering'.

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An Exploration of Process



Caroline Wilkins

As a child I had a great relationship with fantasy. Music has been for me a means of connecting and drawing together those fantasies and energies within myself and with others — a continual life-process.

There is a growing need to constantly affirm a new aesthetic based on personal experience, and to question those existing values which have been handed down by cultural tradition. By looking at the social and historical role of women in music we can find a basis, a clarity and understanding of our position **now** in relation to existing structures, and take on the responsibility of opening up new ones — of re-examining the place of power in relation to creativity, of the intellect in relation to listening.

Institutional specialization within the arts has tended to create a false separation between them, and has become a controlling factor in terms of their development by limiting the possibilities for further experimentation. It is more to do with a question of skills and of acquiring them, and a use of knowledge that is **relative** rather than **absolute**.

Composition is very closely related to performance, in that the **exchange** can be made equal — the composer initiating an idea and the working process extending outwards to become an essentially practical one. This points to more of an understanding and enriching of ideas, as against their ownership and enactment. It also allows for an element of real personal involvement in a project, a freedom on the part of the performer to interpret a concept, and a more spontaneous interaction between members of a group that allows for other levels of communication to happen. There is a feeling of shared responsibility towards the artistic product, and an awareness of the balance between one's own and another's creative ideas, where both needs are at least acknowledged, if not met.

Improvisation — working directly from sound so that the process happens at that moment — allows for an awareness of the possibilities of an overall musical structure. It is about taking risks, trusting the sounds that

emerge, and going **with** them — the difference being that there is no conscious arrangement or juxtaposition of ideas, as in composition. The 'now' feeling generates an intensity, an excitement, together with a stillness and a focusing; there is total control, and a responsibility towards letting an idea take its own course. Improvisation is to do with connection, contact, drama, and the link between physical movement and sound.

One of the main issues to contend with in music-theatre is any subservience of one medium, i.e. music / words / visuals, to the other(s). To tackle the problem it becomes necessary to break down these divisions and see them as originating from the starting-point of **sound** and **movement**, with the **physical** body as an integral source of expression. It is necessary to look at the senses and the way we perceive, crossing over traditionally separated paths of language — hearing the sound of words (and vice versa), visualising a sound, hearing an image. By exploring the timbral quality of sound it is possible to communicate on several levels, so that we become aware of what else is behind those words or music. Starting from a basis where these modes of expression are given equal weight means that they can then work together to make a statement. This involves an opening up of new areas within the genre of music-theatre, the allowing of questioning without having to supply answers, so that an audience has a choice of 'meaning' which is not restricted to one interpretation — they are free to react, to take part actively, to interact in some way with the performers.

Recently my ideas have been focusing on the **origins** of material used in previous performance, such as cabaret, folk, dance and song, and a transformation in terms of their meaning. There is a connection on two levels — that of acknowledging what has gone before, and of seeing the music in relation to now, like a mirror-image that one can step into and see another image reflecting back. Both the inside and outside of the music is presented by drawing

attention to its subjective appeal and at the same time seeing it objectively — a re-connecting of the emotional and intellectual aspects of listening.

This has led me into areas of 'old' sound and sound production, of unrefined 'raw' sound, of hearing one sound **through** another, i.e. on a phonograph, which involves a different kind of aural perception. The relation of timbre to music carries with it an emotional connection between player and listener, and can alter radically the meaning of a sound. Street sounds in particular still have a special social connotation, i.e. sirens, bells, brass bands. Street music has the power to communicate directly by its very roughness (barrel organs, accordions, calliope); its sound is designed to travel outdoors. Sound has become increasingly internalised and 'cleaned up' in terms of where and how it is played, which in turn affects both meaning and context. Dance and cabaret bands have always been a means of providing entertainment through their message of fun; music and dance have the combined ability to set free the body from normal social confines. This relationship can be seen in many ways — where there is interaction, confrontation or even separation as a statement in itself. The **way** in which a musician plays, a dancer moves and an audience reacts are all forms of body-language — a contact — particularly if they are allowed to interweave with one another, to cross over. Each role can be re-examined, together with the voice which carries within itself a directly human message, to create a new dramatic context.

Finally there is a need for more of an international, cultural exchange of music-theatre, to provide a meeting point for discussion/workshops, and to acknowledge influences and differences, so that the process can be allowed to develop freely, away from any self-imposed cultural restrictions.

Music is like a journey — it can go anywhere.

The Contribution of Women Composers

Pauline Oliveros

There are two modes of creativity: (1) active, purposive creativity, resulting from cognitive thought, deliberate acting upon or willful shaping of materials, and (2) receptive creativity, during which the artist is like a channel through which material flows and seems to shape itself. Both modes can be available to a single individual, yet cultural trends often reinforce one mode at the expense of the other. Synchronization of these two modes would seem to be not only a more complete way of working, but a means towards more balanced efforts through a synthesis of the analytical way and the intuitive way.

Balanced efforts certainly make use of both modes. The working methods of Beethoven and Mozart show quite clearly in the following letters of these two composers respectively:

"When I am, as it were, completely myself, entirely alone, and of good cheer — say travelling in a carriage, or walking after a good meal, or during the night when I cannot sleep; it is on such occasions that my ideas flow best and most abundantly. **Whence** and **how** they come, I know not; nor can I force them. Those ideas that please me I retain in memory, and am accustomed, as I have been told, to hum them to myself. If I continue this way, it soon occurs to me how I may turn this or that morsel to account, so as to make a good dish of it, that is to say, agreeably to the rules of counterpoint, to the peculiarities of the various instruments, etc."

"All this fires my soul, and provided I am not disturbed, my subject enlarges itself, becomes methodized and defined, and the whole, though it be long, stands almost complete and finished in my mind, so that I can survey it, like a fine picture or a beautiful statue, at a glance. Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts successively, but I hear them, as it were, all at once. What delight this I cannot tell! All this inventing, this producing, takes place in a pleasing lively dream. Still the actual hearing of the tout ensemble is after all the best. What has been thus produced I do not easily forget, and this is perhaps the best gift I have my divine Maker to thank for . . ."

— Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, from a letter quoted in **Life of Mozart**, Edward Holmes.

"I carry my thoughts about with me for a long time, often for a very long time, before writing them down. I rely on my memory for this and can be sure that, once I have grasped a theme, I shall not forget it even years later. I change many things, discard others, and try again and again until I am satisfied; then, in my head, I begin to elaborate the work in its breadth, its narrowness, its height, its depth and, since I am aware of what I want to do, the underlying idea never deserts me. It rises, it grows, I hear and see the image in front of me from every angle, as if it had been like sculpture, and only the labor of writing it down remains, a labor which need not take long, but varies according to the time at my disposal, since I often work on several things at once. Yet I can be sure that I shall not confuse one with the other. You may ask me where I obtain my ideas. I cannot answer this with any certainty; they come unbidden, spontaneously or unspontaneously. I may grasp them with my hands in the open

air, while walking in the woods, in the stillness of night, at early morning. Stimulated by those moods which poets turn into words, I turn my ideas into tones which resound, roar and rage until at last they stand before me in the form of notes."

— Beethoven, from a Written Conversation with Louis Schlossen (1822 or 1823), **Composers on Music**, edited by Sam Morgenstern.

It is striking that the intuitive process is recognized by both composers, but it is not necessarily called upon voluntarily; rather it taps the artist on the shoulder in unguarded moments. Though each composer recognizes that ideas arrive spontaneously in relation to a special emotional tone and during restful or non-working activity, neither speaks of being able to bring about these necessary conditions for encouraging intuition voluntarily.

There are many accounts from scientists as well as artists engaged in highly-creative work, on the dramatic results of switching from the active analytical mode to the receptive, intuitive mode.

The mathematician Jacques Hadamard records that:

"On being very abruptly awakened by an external noise, a solution long searched for appeared to me at once without the slightest instant of reflection on my part — the fact was remarkable enough to have struck me unforgettably — and in a quite different direction from any of those which I had previously tried to follow."

— **The Creative Process**, Brewster Ghiselin.

Also Kekule solved the chemical problem of the benzene molecule, a ring rather than a chain of carbon atoms, when in a fatigue (or alcohol) engendered daydream, he saw a snake swallow its tail. His intuition gave him the answer in the form of an image while his analytical efforts pursued the wrong theory. Again there is recognition of the intuitive mode but no conscious effort to promote the proper conditions for its presence.

Western Society seems to value most highly, not only its results, but the active analytical mode itself. In education, the development of the analytical mode is fostered almost exclusively, often to the detriment of men and women who would develop more readily using the intuitive mode; or one-sidedness appears in those in whom capacities lean towards the analytical. It is very much like the insistence on right-handedness to the exclusion of left-handedness. Emotional problems often accompany such education, even though a natural left-hander might succeed in becoming a right-hander. Actually it would be fairer to foster the development of ambidexterity, equipping the individual with valuable tools for coping with the world, as well as demonstrating adaptation. Instead we live in a right-handed world, with left-handers suffering the consequences.

Artists who are locked into the analytical mode with little or no access to the intuitive mode are apt to produce one-sided works of art. Certainly many of the totally-determined, serial works of the post-war years seem to fit that category. The opposite possibility is also true. Works produced intuitively, with little or no complementary rationale tend to seem aimlessly one-sided.

But why is intuition so often left to chance? Cultural traditions ordain how women as well as men ought to behave. Traditionally, men are encouraged in self-determining, purposive activity, while women are encouraged to be receptive and dependent. Again, emotional problems can arise when an individual's tendencies are more receptive than active. This is dramatically illustrated in education, where active, self-determining women begin to underachieve in order to avoid loss of self-esteem in the realm of femininity (as shown in the studies of psychologist Matina S. Horner of Harvard). Because women are expected to seek the adoration and approval of men, they must not win in competition with men. Success, particularly in higher education for women, becomes failure. But if her nature is self-determining, such failure represents a conflict of interest which may never be resolved and can become emotionally crippling. The same conflict arises if a woman succeeds in purposive activity, for then she consciously or unconsciously expects

the loss of her femininity. She has violated the cultural paradigm. Men, of course, experience similar difficulty in the opposite mode. A receptive, dependent man suffers in his failure to meet cultural expectations for him.

Recognized composers of Western music have been men. Women have been traditionally discouraged from entering this field. Composers actively determine what others, primarily men, shall do. Women, because of their cultural roles, do not share this experience. Societies actively control the music to be heard. The influence or power of music is well known. "The character of a nation's music cannot be altered without changing the customs and institutions of the state." (Plato, **The Republic**) But women are emerging in the 20th century as composers, and are entering other traditionally male-dominated fields as well. The active influence of women now has some chance of being felt through music as well as other exclusively male fields. This phenomenon may well represent the primary meaning of the liberation movement in the world today. That is, the recognition and re-evaluation of the intuitive mode as being equal to and as essential as the analytical mode for an expression of wholeness in creative work. Oppression of women has also meant devaluation of intuition, which is culturally assigned to women's roles. The examples previously cited of creative working methods show that the role of intuition is associated with mystique or mysterious appearance — unbidden — in otherwise normal, actively pursued, analytical work. Would not any human being benefit from the knowledge and ability to call on intuition as well as analysis at will?

Culturally, woman is the symbolic representation of intuition as man is the symbolic representation of analytical activity. It is my hypothesis that the emergence of women in male dominated fields means a move towards the inclusion of intuition as a complementary mode of creativity. Women's emergence is a significant evolutionary development towards synthesis or wholeness. Neither mode is exclusively the province of one sex or the other. The two modes must be available in any human being, making a more complete expression available in any field.

Since very little attention has been devoted to women as composers, my research will be focused on the following questions:

1. Do women have something to teach men because of their cultural specialization and vice versa?
2. What trends arise in the comparison of many compositions of women? of men? of men and women?
3. What working methods do women employ in composing? What working methods do men employ?
4. What methods or conditions might be employed to promote and train intuition in music composition?
5. How could this work apply to creative activity in general?

I would expect to find that men as well as women rely on intuition in composing, but the attitudes toward intuition might differ considerably. The study of working methods might release important information for the encouragement of women in this field as well as other fields. I would examine first several hundred scores of works by naive composers. This opportunity comes from a unique music course offered at the University of California, San Diego, which requires that its non-musicians compose. It would be interesting to discover and compare these individual approaches to creative activity through interviews. Their responses would be relatively free from training imposed by normal musical educations.

I would also examine the scores of recognized women and men composers for trends and make interviews concerning their working methods.

From P. Oliveros, *Software for people: collected writings, 1963-80*. Baltimore, Smith Publications, 1974.

With the permission of the author.

Editions Number One See

Sue Blakey

Read here of musicians who will soon surround you.

They are now behind you playing hand-held harps. Yet their fingers, although playing very differently, do not touch the strings.

And the four walking above your head are blowing wind instruments.
As they are upside down, you will appreciate that their job is very difficult as obviously the blood must rush to their keys.
For this job, let us clap them. Clap them when you read that sentence again.

“For this job, let us clap them.”

I did.

I, joining with them, shall take out my violin and play you none of the melodies that appear in the whole of

Moussorgsky's
Pictures at an Exhibition.

This begins with a walk to the Gnomes
perhaps.

Do you see my presentation with melody,
accompany and all inhearant polyphony

Or did you read me out of tune?

Just see

What comes next;

EDITIONS NUMBER ONE

Four versions of Editions no. 1 exist:

- One Ay was written for a concert of contemporary music.
- One Bee was written to be read on the radio.
- One See was written for a printed format such as a magazine.
- One Dee was written for one individual to show another.

The changes between the four versions are minimal — odd words here and there — with the aim of allowing the piece to work no matter what the context. Performance notes are available for Ay and Bee and considered unnecessary for See and Dee.

I consider the piece to be musical because of the references contained within it. I do not see the music arising out of the use of language, but through the **thought** of music. In Editions, I enjoy the game of leading the brain on a jaunt, dealing with images it knows and juxtaposing these with apparent impossibilities.

Editions no. 1 may be seen to be working on more than one level, and throughout each version melody, accompaniment and polyphony exist. Audience interpretation of these three factors is encouraged and I would be very interested to hear them. My own interpretation is as follows. The melody is the unfolding of the piece, the accompaniments are the various events as they occur, and the polyphony is all of these events working together in parallel with the progression of the text.

In every version the audience is asked to clap. The piece would not exist successfully without exposure and the moment it is exposed, its audience is working. The inclusion of this segment is a step towards audience manipulation. (It is interesting to note that not once in six performances of One Dee has the direction, “Clap when you read that sentence again”, been followed.) I am asking the audience to work and perform physically as well as mentally.

In one sense this is a private piece in the recipient's mind. Maybe you hear harps, or violins, or Moussorgsky's Gnomes, or word rhythms. Student composers are told to hear the music from the inside. Perhaps this piece is an attempt to do so.

Teaching about Women's Music in an American University

Susan Erickson

The women's movement of the last two decades has had far reaching effects on all areas of inquiry, including music. Music historians are giving increased attention to women's historical roles as composers, performers, and publishers of music. One result has been a rise in scholarly papers, articles, books, and editions.¹ The musical scene on both sides of the Pacific has been enlivened in recent years by conferences and concerts devoted to women's music.² All this activity — both scholarly and musical — has led some of us to ask new questions about the roles of women in music, both historical and present-day, and even to re-examine the conventional ways in which music history has been taught.

In the Spring of 1982, while teaching a course on women composers at the University of California at Davis, I had a rare opportunity to explore some of these issues. Courses on women composers had been offered by music departments on various American campuses since the mid-1970's, often in conjunction with Women's Studies programmes. One of the first was the course taught by Professor Jane Bowers in 1976 at Portland State University entitled 'Women musicians and composers in Western Europe and the United States between 1100 and the present'. Women's Studies programmes in the United States now exist at a number of universities, such as Princeton, Harvard, Cornell, Yale, and Boston. Music courses are frequently a component of these interdisciplinary programmes.³

My course, 'Women composers: a historical survey', was the first of its kind to be taught on the Davis campus. It was offered through the Music Department as a directed group study in conjunction with the Women's Studies Programme, and funded by a Course Improvement and Development Award from the Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

Getting to teach the course at all turned out to be more difficult than I had anticipated. Both the Women's Studies Curriculum Committee and the Administration were enthusiastic, but when the course first came up for discussion at a meeting of the Music Faculty, it failed to win approval. Some of the objections raised were that the course was ideological, that it would be dealing with minor composers, that the time was not right for such a course, etc.

When I was informed of this decision (I had not been present at the meeting), I requested that I be allowed to meet with the faculty myself so that I might have a chance to discuss the course in more detail and deal with the concerns which had been raised. Colleagues from other departments and from the administration gave help in the form of supporting letters and moral support, and one member of the music faculty prepared a statement in defence of the course.

In my own remarks I stressed that the course would be more concerned with musical history than with ideology, but that I also saw some value in placing music in the context of the history of ideas, especially in an interdisciplinary course such as this one. As to the objection that the course would be essentially one in minor



Francesca Caccini

composers, I pointed out that the study of secondary figures can shed light on a period of musical activity and increase our understanding of the major figures of that period; furthermore, the importance of many of these composers was being reassessed as more of their works became available. In view of the increased interest in women composers in general, the time did indeed seem right for such a course. The outcome this time was favourable, with a majority of the faculty voting for the course to be offered.

Since the course was interdepartmental, it attracted both music majors and women's studies majors, as well as a few students from other departments who were interested in the topic of women in music. Initially there was some concern on the part of fellow faculty members as to how I would handle such a mixed group: more specifically, how I would convey different stylistic periods to the non-majors, while dealing with the more specialised needs of third and fourth year music majors. However, the diversity of background among the students, rather than posing a problem, turned out to be one of the more rewarding aspects of the class.

Since the course was a historical survey, the approach to the subject matter was chronological, and included all periods of music from antiquity to the present. No suitable text for a course of this type was available at that time;⁴ selected journal articles and excerpts from larger works were used, as well as assigned listening and occasional live performances.

One problem in studying women composers up to the present time has been the unavailability of much of their music. Fortunately this situation is changing. Women composers are active and visible, at least to judge by the musical scene in large U.S. and Australian cities. The

situation is different when one is teaching traditional music history, however. Most standard textbooks on the subject omit any mention of women as composers; if women are mentioned at all, it is only as performers or patrons.⁵ Anyone seeking to learn about women in music history will have to look beyond the standard texts.

In the beginning of my course, I raised a few questions for consideration. These included: 1) Have women generally composed in a more limited number of genres than their male counterparts, and if so, why? 2) What factors have led women to compose (and publish)? 3) What factors have limited women's composing (and publishing)? 4) What roles in musical activity (singer, instrumentalist, conductor, composer, teacher, etc.) have been acceptable for women at different stages and in different places throughout history? Linda Nochlin relates similar issues to art history in her thought-provoking essay "Why are there no great women artists?" and concludes that it is our institutions and our education which need to be examined.⁶ The parallels with women composers are many.

Although it is not the intention of this article to present a historical survey, it might be useful to mention a few of the women composers who have played a significant role in music history. First of all there are the many anonymous composers, both in antiquity and in the medieval period.⁷ Some of the composers of Gregorian chant, for example, may well have been nuns, since we know that musical composition did take place in convents.



Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre

One of the most important of these nun composers, for whom a considerable amount of documentation exists, is Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179), abbess of Rupertsberg nr. Bingen. A mystic and writer, she was also composer of a liturgical cycle of 77 poems with monophonic music and an early morality play *Ordo virtutum*, which is in dramatic verse with 82 melodies. Her music has been made available through a modern edition and recording.⁸ She has yet to find a place in the average music history text, however.

Medieval women are represented in the secular sphere as well; indeed, recent research on composers and poets sheds light on certain musical and literary traditions. Meg Bogin's full-length study, *The Women Troubadours*,⁹ makes available to us again a body of poetry which reveals another facet of the troubadour tradition and asks us to re-examine our concept of courtly love. The Countess of Dia (born ca. 1140) is one of twenty known women *trobairitz* from southern France, and the author of the only female troubadour song for which the music survives.

Francesca Caccini (1587-ca.1640) has until recently been known to music historians mainly as a singer at the court of the Medici in Florence and the daughter of Giulio Caccini, a key figure in the emerging style of the early baroque. Francesca was a composer as well; her opera, *La Liberazione di Ruggiero da l'isola d'Alcina* of 1625, is the first known opera by a woman. More importantly perhaps, she was a prolific composer of monodies; her

publication, *Il Primo Libro* of 1618 was at that time the largest collection of solo songs by a single composer to appear in print. As more of her music is being published and performed, we are coming to reassess her importance as a composer.



Clara Schumann

Elizabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (ca. 1664-1729) was one of the most successful women composers of all time. A protegee of Louis XIV, she wrote an opera, several cantatas, two collections of harpsichord pieces (she was herself a renowned harpsichord virtuoso), and a number of violin sonatas; nearly all of these were published in her lifetime. The sonatas are particularly important for students of music history, since they are among the earliest composed in France and some of the earliest in any country to be written by a non-violinist. La Guerre's music receives prominent mention in specialised histories of French music and the French cantata,¹⁰ but generally not in the standard textbooks.

Sometimes a composer is left out of the histories for the simple reason that most of her music is still unpublished. This is the case with Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805-47), sister of Felix Mendelssohn. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* maintains that "her historical importance consists in her having provided, both in her diary and in her correspondence, much essential source material for the biography of Felix, to whom she was very close." Actually, she and Felix received the same sort of musical training in childhood. She was said to have been as gifted as her brother (Felix always submitted his compositional ideas for her approval) and he often acknowledged her superiority as a pianist. She composed throughout her life, but left only eleven published opus numbers; they include a piano trio, which shows her to be



Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel

a very interesting composer indeed. Most of her works (which number in the hundreds) were never published, due largely to her family's disapproval of a woman entering the professional area (Felix did publish six of her songs under his own name in his op. 8 and 9). In an age when women were generally restricted to writing in the smaller forms — piano pieces and songs — Fanny also composed cantatas, oratorios, and dramatic scenes. Her unpublished works can be found today in the New York Public Library, the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the Library of Congress in Washington, and the Mendelssohn-Archiv in West Berlin.

The foregoing composers are just a few of those I hope to see in the music history textbooks which will be written in the years to come. What of our own century? How available is the music of today's women composers and what sort of support are they receiving from our institutions? The retrieval of the past, though essential to a balanced view of music history, is perhaps even more important in creating a favourable environment in which today's composers may work and flourish.

In dealing with the 20th century in my course, I found much more women's music to be available. The American, Amy Marcy Cheney Beach (1867-1944), is particularly well-represented. She was highly prolific and wrote in most forms, large and small; her works include an opera and she has the distinction of being the first American woman symphonist. Practically all of her works were published in her lifetime. She is perhaps the most frequently recorded woman composer, due largely to the recent American Bicentennial rather than to any lasting influence she had on subsequent American composers. A more innovative American composer is Ruth Crawford-Seeger (1901-53), who applied avant-garde techniques in her **Piano Study in Mixed Accents** (1930) and the **String Quartet** (1931).

Some living composers I chose to include in the course itself were Vivian Fine (**Alceste**, 1960), Miriam Gideon (**The Seasons of Time**), and Barbara Kolb (**Crosswinds**, 1974). Whenever possible, we also took advantage of live performances in the area. Two California Bay Area composers whose works we heard in concerts at Davis were Elinor Armer and Tamar Diesendruck (the latter was part of a concert entitled 'Seven centuries of women composers').

Women are composing in large numbers, to judge from my admittedly brief look through American academia. But what sort of sustained remuneration can they expect from institutions, particularly colleges and universities? Adrienne Fried Block, in a study for the College Music Society in 1976, concluded that women composers are virtually excluded from university faculties; at the time of the survey, only 5.8% of composition teachers in American universities were women.¹¹ I have not seen any comparable studies for Australian educational institutions.

These then were some of the issues we considered in our course: factors which facilitated or inhibited women's composing and publishing, the extent to which they wrote in various genres and the roles which were open to them at different times, the availability of their music and their treatment by music historians.

One other issue which had to be addressed, if only because it continues to surface in music criticism even today, is the question of whether there is a distinct women's musical style. The existence of an identifiable women's approach to literature has been convincingly documented by Sandra Gilbert and others,¹² but the unique characteristics which she finds in women's literature have, I think, as much to do with content as with style. In the discussions which took place in our class, the music students were able to point out to the non-majors that it is only the text or subject matter, and not musical style itself, which distinguishes certain so-called 'women's music'. (Yet Arthur Hoeree, writing about Germaine Tailleferre in **The New Grove** in 1980, describes her music as "gracious and feminine.")

The course which I taught at David was a one-time

offering funded by a special grant, and as such it has not become part of the regular curriculum. This is in some ways regrettable, in others perhaps not. Like most music historians who are interested in women's music, I see one principal aim of such specialised courses to be the eventual inclusion of women composers in the mainstream of music history. Until women take their rightful place in textbooks, musical anthologies, performances and recordings, and the teaching of music history itself, however, such courses, along with all specialised studies, will continue to serve a very necessary function. Not the least of this function is the providing of role models to aspiring women composers within the university system.



Ruth Crawford-Seeger

Footnotes

1. For a good account of recent publications, see the Review Essay by Elizabeth Wood, 'Women in music', in *Signs* VI/2 (Winter (1980):283-97.
2. For example, the conferences in New York City 1980, Los Angeles 1982, Sydney 1982.
3. See Nancy B. Reich, 'A Report from the First National Congress on Women in Music', *College Music Symposium* 22/1 (Spring 1982):120-24.
4. Two anthologies have since appeared: *Women in music: an anthology of source readings from the Middle Ages to the present*, ed. Carol Neuls-Bates (New York: Harper & Row, 1982) and *Women making music*, ed. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (University of Illinois Press, 1985).
5. The only woman mentioned as a composer by Donald Jay Grout in his *History of Western music*, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), p. 573, is Clara Schumann, who was actually more important as a performer.
6. This essay appears in *Woman in sexist society*, ed. Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran (New York: Basic Books, 1971), pp. 480-510.
7. Sophie Drinker in *Music and women* (Coward-McCann, 1948; reprint Zenger, 1977) maintains that half the folk music of the world has been composed by women.
8. *Hildegard von Bingen: Lieder*, ed. P. Barth, I. Ritscher and J. Schmidt-Gorg (Salzburg, 1969). *Ordo virtutum: sequentia/Hildegard von Bingen* (Koln: Harmonia Mundi, 1982).
9. Meg Bogin, *The Women troubadours* (New York: Two Continents Publishing Group, 1976).
10. James R. Anthony, *French Baroque music from Beaujoyeux to Rameau* (London, 1973; New York: W.W. Norton, 1978); David Tunley, *The Eighteenth-century French cantata* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1974). See also Lionel de La Laurencie, *L'Ecole française de violon de Lully à Viotti*, 3 vols. (Paris: Librairie Delagrave, 1922-24).
11. College Music Society, *The Status of women in College music: preliminary studies*, 1976.
12. See especially Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the attic: A study of women and the literary imagination in the nineteenth century* (Yale University Press, 1979).

Lights, Mirrors and Miniatures?

Jan Friedl

"I was interested in the theatre at an early age. We played Charades . . . and I made scenery out of cardboard. My grandmother's black Sarotoga trunks also held garments which were ideal for dressing up. I wrote words and music for 'Mogaza', a fairy tale, when I was fourteen, but my class at school found it a bit too difficult to sing." (Esther Rofe)¹

This year a number of concerts of works by Australian women composers have been held in Melbourne. The experience of organising them has highlighted the problems involved with planning events of this kind. More importantly, it has raised some questions concerning women's music in this country, and in particular the genres and forms in which women compose.

In preparing for these concerts, the organisers paid heed to the usual considerations of any group wanting to perform contemporary music. The material needed to conform to the particular format of the concert, as well as be scored for the instrumentalists available. Also, it was necessary to research a reasonable amount of material in order to compile a programme that was neither too homogenous nor restricted in its outlook.

The first was a series of two concerts undertaken by the Eureka Ensemble. The central aim of this group was to perform material which had the potential to be opened out, either visually, or by means of sung or spoken word, the idea being that concert-going should not be a clinical experience, but perhaps, even fun. It was felt that the 'Women at Work' concerts might in some small measure fill an area of neglect, (this was after all the end of the Decade for Women), but in addition there was optimism that some good material might be available to meet Eureka's particular programming needs.

This proved to be a sound supposition. Of the limited amount of material composed by women, a good number of works contained visual or theatrical elements or points of reference. For example, looking at some of the composers represented in the Eureka concert: **Peggy Glanville-Hicks** seems always to have been interested, throughout her long career, in working in and through the theatre. In doing so, she has collaborated with a dazzling list of writers on a variety of visual and literary themes. These writers have included Thomas Mann, Lawrence Durrell, Wallace Stevens and Robert Graves. **Alison Bauld** trained as a drama student, and much of her work is theatrical, or uses text or image. **Moya Henderson** appears often to have written with a socially-based inspiration; even instrumental works like **Larrikin's Lot** and **Min-Min Light** have a caption or story-line to them. **Anne Boyd's** studies in ethnomusicology have a strong influence on her compositions. This interest has focused mainly on Japan, Java and Australian Aboriginal Culture. **Anne Carr-Boyd** has studied early Australian music and the roots of our composing tradition. She has also been interested in ethnic and Aboriginal themes.

We relied heavily on the Australia Music Centre for help. Being in Melbourne, and on a low budget, can be a problem if one is not able to plan well enough ahead to correspond with the A.M.C. by mail. It took quite some time to arrive at a short-list after going through the various stages of acquiring catalogues, updates, then more specific

lists and samples of scores of ensemble works with the necessary requirements. It would have been much easier, and saved a great deal of time and money, if a day could have been spent at the Music Centre examining scores and listening to tapes. Lucky Sydney-siders!

Having decided on the works to be performed, acquiring scores and parts required more weeks of phone calls, and visits to the State Library where the original and apparently unpublished Glanville-Hicks work, **Thomsoniana**, was housed. If parts were too expensive or difficult to obtain, it was necessary to liaise with the composer. Without exception they were willing and extra helpful. "I wish I could pour a drink down the phone to you, dear", said Miss Glanville-Hicks one day. In addition, deals had to be struck with publishers to enable us to work on photocopies until the real thing arrived from London!



Peggy Glanville-Hicks

Despite these time and money problems, we managed to perform the 'Women at Work' concerts on schedule, and our aims were reasonably met as compared with the standard set by our previous concert, the first of the 'Really Red Series.'

The Women 150th Festival, September 1985, was still in preparation at the time of writing this article. The aim of the Festival was to celebrate the achievements of women in the arts, as part of the overall 150th Anniversary celebrations in Victoria. Some of the objectives of the Music Committee in applying to the Music Board for funding were,

"to perform music composed by women, particularly contemporary music that has not been previously performed;"

"to give the music-attending public a chance . . . to re-evaluate the contributions women have made to music"

"to provide opportunities for women to participate in areas of music that are almost completely dominated by men, for example, jazz, conducting and composing."

In addition to a number of workshops in improvisation and conducting, and concerts of jazz and folk music, some

chamber, instrumental and vocal concerts were planned at the Elm Street space. The composers would all be women, but not necessarily the players. It was felt that since performance was not an area of discrimination in this country, (in fact even the Berlin Philharmonic has used an Australian woman viola-player), men should take part in the performances. For example, one evening was to be devoted to works of Ann Boyd, performed by, amongst others, Hartley Newnham, for whom she had written much of her vocal music, and Nicholas Routley.



Anne Boyd

It was felt, however, that the concert of women's orchestral and larger chamber works should be conducted by a woman, this being an area in which women were, sadly, lacking! The committee thought that what appeared to be a real shortage of female orchestral material went hand in hand with a lack of women conductors. If women could obtain the powerful position of preparing and conducting larger concerts, then perhaps more women composers would be encouraged and even commissioned to write orchestral works.

Of course difficulties presented themselves. Who in Australia had the experience and confidence to conduct a large ensemble in works which would need to be brought together in the space of (limited budget!) two or three rehearsals? These works, moreover, are not in the popular repertoire and some of them might have proved difficult to bring off.

We identified Helen Quach as the only female conductor in Australia who had had sufficient orchestral experience to rehearse and conduct the concert, and who was available at the time. She had, in fact, conducted numerous symphony orchestras in Asia, America and Europe, but since returning to Australia 3 years ago had received very few Australian offers, until contacted by Women 150th. Helen agreed, and in consultation with her we explored the repertoire available for a concert of larger scale works.



Moya Henderson

As suggested above, one finds, in looking at the A.M.C. lists and talking to composers, that there is a real dearth of material available. To give a rough idea, on studying the update on recent score acquisitions for mid '85 in the A.M.C. library, one finds that just under 7% of the material is written by women, and only a very tiny proportion of it is for a larger chamber group.

The final choice of programme was:

Margaret Sutherland	Concerto for Strings
Mary Mageau	Concerto Grosso
Ann Boyd	My Name is Tian
Peggy Glanville-Hicks	Letters From Morocco
Helen Gifford	Time And Time Again

plus Moya Henderson's **Sacred Sites** for the mammoth Town Hall organ and tape. A work by Jennifer Fowler was considered, but the score from London simply did not arrive in time, (we will probably still have to foot the bill for that).

* * * *



Margaret Sutherland

From these two experiences with women's music it would appear that Australian female composers have devoted a large body of their work to 'theatre', and a minimal amount to larger scale orchestral works. (In stating this I am not suggesting that one activity cancels out the other, nor that one is more significant than the other.) It would not be possible to supply definitive answers as to why this trend has occurred, especially within the parameters of this short article; nevertheless, reasons should perhaps be explored by all those interested in the state of music writing in Australia, and a few of them will be considered here.

But first, it should be remembered that women have contributed significantly to the inheritance which today's composers have received from composition in 20th century Australia. Here in Melbourne, for instance, up until and shortly after the War, we had a succession of women teaching composition at the Melba Conservatorium: Esther Rofe, Peggy Glanville-Hicks, and more recently Janet Perkins. It should also be remembered that, despite the enormous social and historical odds against her, it is a woman, Margaret Sutherland, who, up until now, has been "the doyen of Australian music."²

In the light of this historical picture of accomplishment, have women gravitated to the theatre simply because it is easier to obtain performances of their works — because

their works will be played a greater number of times and be heard by a larger number of people? Have they taken refuge there to escape what many of them see as the dead hand (or ear) of Academia: to avoid being judged by the growing number of male composers writing within institutions, and largely for one another?

If these last two considerations are paramount, why is it that, even when not writing directly for ballet, theatre and opera, women have written concert works which have had a visual potential or an oral language element within their structure? Is it because women write their music more openly or directly under a general interest in the Human condition? This assertion is probably too extreme if one considers the number of male composers who have sought to express ideas and emotions beyond the 'purely-musical'.

Nevertheless, for many Australian women composers the poetic, visual influence has been paramount, whether it has occurred as an interest in personal psyche, for example Esther Rofe's **Mathina**, or a broader interest in social ideas and comment, as in the work of Moya Henderson. Moya herself has suggested that many women have an innate interest in ritual, which of course ties in with the theatrical. In this respect we can mention also Anne Boyd who links the personal and ritual under an influence from Asiatic sources.

In addition to social and ritual themes, Australian women were some of the earliest purveyors of Nationalism, for example, Rofe's **Terra Australis** premiered by Borovansky in Melbourne, 1946. About this time, when Mirrie Hill was figuring bush animals in her children's songs, Percy Grainger was still pursuing his interest in English 'Gothic' and folk music.

If an interest in the theatrical and ritual can be seen as a singular mark of women's writing, we must then address

the question of why so very little has been achieved by women in the field of opera. (One exception here is Peggy Glanville-Hicks' **Transposed Heads**, which has sustained many successful productions, although it has taken years for the work to be produced here, long after successful productions overseas.) Why this gap in women's writing, when opera itself is potentially the most complete form of ritual or celebration of what it is to be Human?

It may be that we need to address ourselves even more vigorously to questions of artistic management in Australia. Opera houses are run almost solely by men; boards of management are largely male dominated, and, perhaps more significantly, artistic directors and conductors are almost, without exception, male.

Finally, in considering why women have written mostly small-scale works, we should look at the fact that historically, Australian women composers have suffered simply by being Australian. Writing of early Australian composition, Dr. Radic suggests, "the neglect they suffered was shared with male composers. Australian composition until very recent times has been neglected and downgraded."²

Relative to the rest of the arts, this condition remains. Looking at the mid-year Federal Budget for 1985, we see that Dr. Radic's comment is once again brought into focus. Given that the extra funds hoped for by the Music Board may have been earmarked for individuals by way of commissions etc., the neglect, shared by women, will probably continue.

1. 'Esther Rofe interviewed by Pauline Petrus', in **Lip** magazine, 1978/79.
2. Therese Radic. 'Australian women in music', in **Lip** magazine, 1978/79.

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Bronwyn Calcutt's Music Theatre in Aboriginal Communities

The Umbrella People was a piece created early in 1983 by the Darwin-based Theatre in Education Company for a tour of remote Aboriginal communities in northern Arnhem Land. It evolved in response to what at first seemed like limitations: the minimal grasp of English of its potential audience and their radically different lifestyle to my own. Added to this were the requirements of touring with limited sets and costumes, and keeping effects to a portable minimum. It was these constraints, however, that opened vast possibilities on another level and made my true task apparent — to create a piece of theatre that appealed directly to the senses and emotions of its audience, replacing our verbal/intellectual language with a broader language of experience and response.



I did not frame the environment as traditional indoor theatre does, but instead allowed the performers to operate as 'resonators' in open space, much as domes or statues activate and charge the space around them.

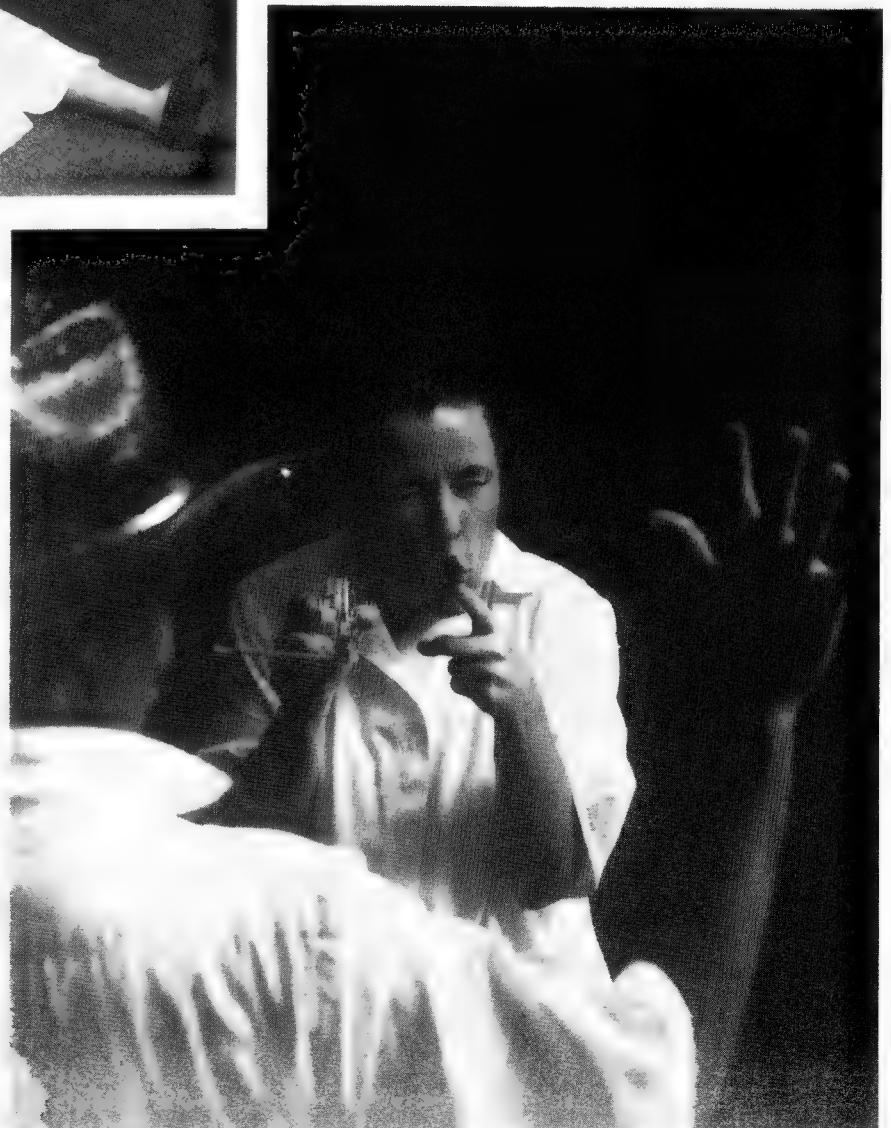
My approach to character involved a process of ever greater simplification and an attempt to find correspondences between temperament, colour and sound. The instruments used were also deliberately simple — a selection that could be found in any primary classroom: tambourines, recorders, pennywhistles, triangles, woodblocks, guyro, bells, shakers, cymbals and a toy saxophone. These instruments achieved the necessary clarity and penetration in the outdoor space.





Unlike the Umbrella People, **Pyramid** begins with an uninhabited environment which is discovered by two characters. Before we started work, I had intended the characters to rely fully on body work and the instruments for their 'language'. However, in rehearsal we found that vocal sounds, produced spontaneously under the pressure of internal emotions, were effective and appropriate. Thus, we developed this use of gestural and emotive sound, balancing it against the external support of the instruments.

The approach to character is again non-naturalistic. The characters' attributes are exaggerated to generate a more intense emotional field than that conveyed by conventional acting, thus excluding the need for dialogue. The movements swing between extreme dynamism and tense stillness, faces held in rigid masklike expressions, gestures stylised and precise. The characters and their attendant musical motifs interweave contrapuntally as focus alternates between them.



Since leaving the Northern Territory I have been working in Adelaide with a group called 'Magick Circus' who perform in schools and in the community. The work **Cultureshock Quartet**, used many of the elements of my previous pieces. It began with an environment of four coloured stools and introduced, sequentially, four coloured and masked characters, each playing an instrument.



The theme of this piece was cultural conflict resolved through tolerance and empathy. The qualities of conflict were expressed directly through the music which created an atmosphere of tension and dissatisfaction. Later this year, I look forward to touring this piece in Aboriginal communities with a Northern Territories Arts group called 'Kids Convoy'.



It was interesting to hear from the teachers that the children particularly enjoyed seeing white people in an absurd and humorous light, laughing and enjoying their eccentricities openly without shame — unlike most classroom situations which enforced silence and respect for whiteman's teachings and methods.

In Aboriginal society those who have particular talents do not have higher status, but a greater responsibility to share those talents with others.



Space and Resonance as Determinants of Musical Style and Sound Art: a Personal View

Ros Bandt

Physical space time space sound space
a position of emptiness, a context of respite and transparency in which to work: these are the conditions which are conducive to my sound art, whatever the form. Within space an object, a sound, has the time and the volume to resonate. The continuity or passage of sound then invites perception. **Space and resonance** are interdependent. In my music and sculpture this duality can be seen at work in many ways.

↑ **Space** = room, nothingness, sense of place
↓ **Resonance** = timbral formation, decay time, sonority.

Painters have empty canvases, sculptors three dimensional space, dancers floor space, musicians concert halls, environmental artists the world around them. Any of these may converge to define a context for my work. Only there must be room to move physically, emotionally and psychologically. The greater the space, the greater the osmosis between artist and context.

Environmental Spaces as Musical Materials

It is no surprise that I often find myself working in cool, dark, cavernous spaces away from the world. The separateness of enclosed sound space is exciting to experience — like living inside an ear. Large spaces inspire contemplation. The slightest sound speck has the power to travel in many directions and resonate for any length of time. Environments conducive to heightened concentration and enlarged perception are fertile creative fields in which to work.

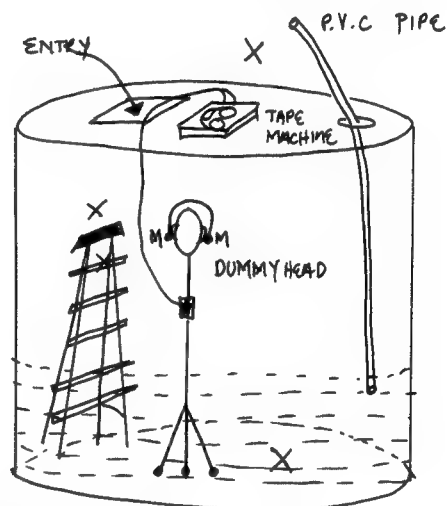
The acoustic chambers or 'tanks' in which I have found myself include cement water tanks, Korrumburra and Daylesford, Victoria, wheat silos, Lambing Flat Young, N.S.W., a carpark cylinder, Collins Place, Melbourne and irrigation channels from the Murray River. All involve concrete cylinders of different sizes and dimensions. Each one has peculiar characteristics, both in terms of resonance and as a working space. Time scales and sound modification possibilities also vary. Everything is enlarged because of the natural amplification of the chambers.

Initial experiments in the Korrumburra water tank involved investigating the space and resonance in various ways, as if searching for the identity of a drum. Long tones were sung and played to test the decay time, while for the drones, various pitches were tried to find those which blended in with the natural frequency of the environment, the aim being to achieve a certain 'sympathetic' tuning to the space. As the reverberation time was up to 8 seconds, contrapuntal investigations became possible using only solo bamboo flute.

The direction and speed of the sound, spiralling around the space, influenced the form, content and length of the improvisations. Voice, bamboo flute, p.v.c. tube, cymbal, cement tank cover, Renaissance recorder, ladder, were some of the simple tools used to activate the space and induce a sound situation.

Grouping sounds into phrases and pacing the speed of changes in the music rely heavily on the natural feedback

of sound in the space. Real time composition is then in process. It is a direct way of working, and a common one for the composer/performer. The raw materials are crafted as a continuous creative act. There are no rules, stock themes or props: just ears and waiting, listening, placing and crafting. It is like sculpting brush strokes through time. The three dimensional aspect of this work is captured in the recording process. The omnidirectional Sennheiser dummyhead system recreates a 360° voluminous image for the listener, rather like three dimensional photography.¹



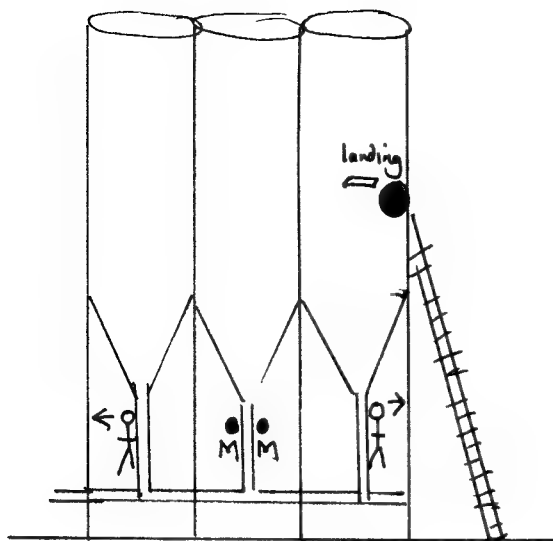
M = MICROPHONES

X = POSITION OF COMPOSER-PERFORMER

Water tank, Korrumburra, Victoria

Working together with another person, John Griffiths, in a nest of wheat silos, provided quite different results, although the musical real time compositions and improvisations were also heavily reliant upon the space and its resonance. An initial sound test from a landing high inside one of the silos showed the environment to be unsatisfactory. The sound was amorphous and without timbral interest. It was also physically difficult to make the climb up the face of the 89 foot high structure, not to mention the problem of centering the microphones in suspension. The nest of six silos, joined together in quasi bishop-hat style, made possible multi-directional work at ground level.

In **Mating Call**, a piece for two voices, microphones were placed in a central position while the performers faced opposite directions within their own individual circular space. The sounds aimed at the facing walls bounced back to be mixed in the two central chambers. Thus, all the musical interaction was dependent upon listening and waiting. In **Sweet Germinal Wheat** for lute and recorder, both performers faced each other in the same silo to make a joint spontaneous improvisation from no predetermined material. The incantation for solo voice and bull roarer, **Silo Song**, was paced according to the physical possibilities of, simultaneously, spinning a rope and singing. The



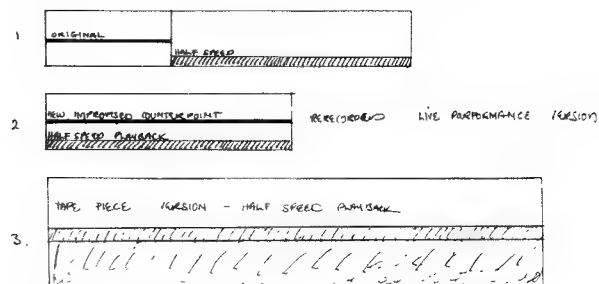
Young roller flour mill

diameter of the silo was an important pre-compositional factor. The spirit of the silo was evoked through the vibrating or humming of the exterior silos. Since the silos were not very reverberant, they served more as performing arenas than sound modifiers. An early Sunday morning, a balmy wheat smell, cool contrasting shadows and emptiness, together provided an atmosphere which influenced the pieces greatly. The fact that there were some interested onlookers also made these improvisations more consciously performed than exploratory.

The Collins Place Car Park pieces have combined all the aforementioned methods of working: rigorous experiments, exploratory investigations, improvisations of all types, real time composition and prepared performance. The space is close to home, accessible by car and has electric power and light. In this sense much of the risk and transitoriness involved in the other environmental work is not present. The Car Park is a known quantity with the possibility of re-entry, and does not involve hard negotiating, like sitting in water in a cement tank in the middle of winter, or climbing many feet up a ladder. Longer and more involved work has been possible. **Genesis**, for psaltery and tape, emerged from several investigations of this venue. Once the vibrating frequency and decay time were ascertained, the work was prepared with the space's acoustic in mind. A scale was established and tempered. I practised as a raga player would, intently working through the material to allow various interpretations to be extended for particular occasions.

A mobile studio was set up and a technician, in this case Warren Burt, started and monitored the machines. The compositional process involved the following three stages. The end result can be either a taped piece or a live performance.

1. Record the basic psaltery improvisation in the space.
2. Play back the recorded track half speed, as a bass track for a second line of counterpoint, which is improvised live against it in the same space. Record both.
3. Play back at half speed for tape piece. Or perform (2) live against (1), played back at half speed.

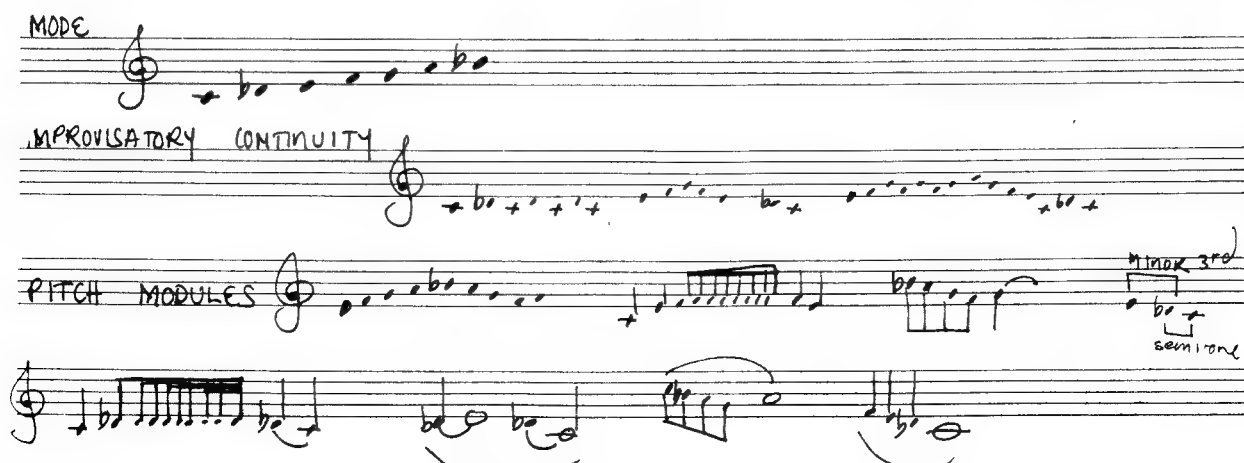


Pitch and timbral modification in **Genesis**².

The length of phrases and speed of change in **Genesis** are determined by the time it takes for the notes to end. The extra resonance acquired by lowering the pitch and re-recording gives a degree of timbral detail not possible on any acoustic instrument I've heard to date. It is unlikely that the subtlety of the space and its resonance could be matched electronically, be it synthesisers or computers. Certainly the drama of performance would not be equalled in a studio situation. The cylinder is 5 storeys high and twenty-five feet in diameter. All performances have taken place through the night or very early on Sunday morning, to avoid the traffic sounds caused by cars entering the carpark on the spiral road built around the outside of the cylinder.

In pieces other than **Genesis**, the sounds of car hums, horns and brakes have been exploited. Sewer pipes, drums, kalimbas, and golf balls have excited resonant ceiling tones which have added extra contrapuntal and timbral interest. A hole in the floor of the cylinder has been used as a resonator for the simple sewer pipe and vocal piece, **Mary at the Dairy**. Slapping the end of the pipe in different ways and playing it in different parts of the hole produced different timbres. In this piece it was used as a pulsing drum accompaniment to a vocal improvisation based on the metric, rhythmic and vowel structure of a joke told to me by a child in England.

My most recent work in resonant spaces has been in irrigation channels in the Murray River area. Echoes occurring at particular intervals are in fixed time relations, which sets limits for working. The impact of travelling and of changing contexts is fundamental to this work, which is environmental. Every sound ambience has a defined space and resonance, but this common truth is often overlooked. Sound that is appropriate to a space and context is possibly the guiding principle in my work, whether composition, performance or sculpture. A sense

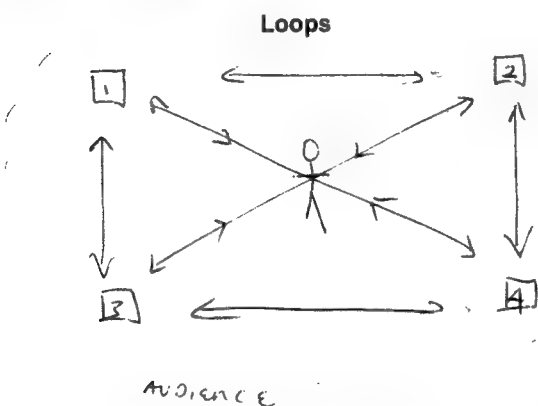


Genesis, for medieval psaltery and tape

of place is fundamental to the production and showing of any art work.

A Sense of Place

An invitation to work in a large dead space like the Grande Salle in the Centre Georges Pompidou poses certain problems, since much of my music is totally inappropriate to such a context and acoustic space. Decisions have to be made which will enable the sound work to be presented with integrity. With the fabulous bank of technology available at the Pompidou it seemed possible to create an individual soundspace using prepared tape and light. In **Loops**, for solo performer with four recorders, voice and quadrophonic tape, a game situation was set in motion. On each of the four tape tracks there is a recording of 3-part counterpoint, similar to the processes worked through live by the solo performer. This involves 2 recorders, or 2 recorders and voice working in tiny cyclic eddies which become transformed in length, pitch and articulation. The four tracks and the live performance together result in 15 part counterpoint which changes in different ways, some parts being fixed on the tape and other overlays controlled by the player. With each change of instrument from sopranino to bass, the tessitura and harmonic bands change in different parallel fourths and fifths. An illuminated red cross carves out the sound lines, marking the relationship between the 'player' and the sound field 'tape'.

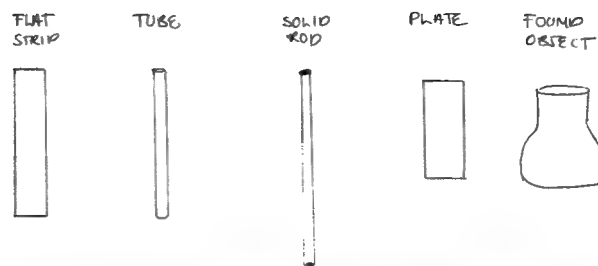


Where there is little acoustic resonance, a sensitive balance between the live performer and the tape playback is required. The prepared tape was recorded in a dry studio so that ambiguity of the sound source is possible. The direction and speed of change can be beguiling at the presto tempo. It's a fast tennis match, placing the performer in overdrive. The space creates its own spatial dimension quite apart from the venue.

With the piece **Genesis**, a different approach to the same space was taken: the aim was to change the centre of Paris into the centre of Melbourne, by changing the concert hall into the Collins Place car park environment. This was achieved by very loud playback of the very resonant performance tape, and almost no lighting. The solo performer is a tiny illuminated ornament to the great throbbing abyss, rather than a central protagonist.

Resonance as a Compositional Tool

Soft and Fragile³, the glass music begun in 1978, utilizes space and resonance in quite different ways. It is an ongoing, oral tradition art form, made on my original instrument, the flagong. This is a free standing wooden sculpture with 31 cut glass flagons suspended and played with mallets. Each of the bells are selected for their resonant and timbral properties as well as their pitch. To maximise the instrument's resonance potential, it must be played in a good, naturally resonant acoustic with a clean and uncluttered atmosphere. The transparency of the different coloured glass and the visual form of the object are intentional visual clues to the aural perception that is required to appreciate the work. The improvisations and pieces which have evolved deal, not so much with the way sounds begin, as with the way they end. Glissandos,



— used in **Soundscreen** 1984, **Brunswick Tech Windchime Sculpture** 1982 and **Selby Floating Tapestry** 1982.

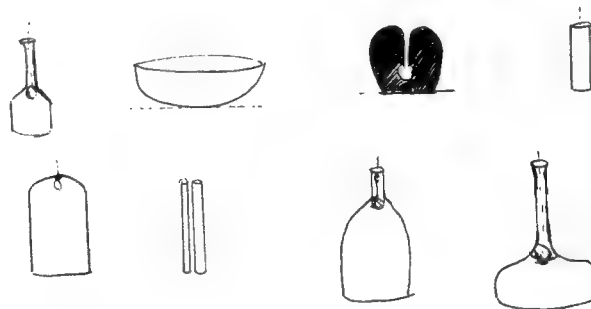
Brass — a resonant sound source

tremolos and broken fragments contain interesting details in their decay. Microscopic timbral changes, pitch modules, time lengths based on respiratory and kinetic body functions, and silence are the structural elements in this music. Carefully placed sound particles can emit great strength. Line, articulation, clean brush strokes and a transparent canvas are the compositional components in the creative act. The music is made almost exclusively at night — an emptier time of the day and more conducive to the perception of resonance. Concerts of this music can only take place when the acoustic and audience situation are appropriate.

Resonance in Instruments and Sound Sculptures

The choice of sound materials for instruments is intuitively guided by inherent characteristics of resonance and timbre. Glass and clay, being brittle and vitreous have distinctive properties unlike other materials — they are penetrating, have a long decay time and interesting overtone combinations. Brass also, whether flat, spun or cylindrical is capable of a shimmering decay formation. The potential resonance of the metal can be changed by the gauge and thickness of the material, its shape, form and method of suspension.

Certain three dimensional forms are also characterised by long vibration times and full bodied overtone structures: bell and gong types are examples. Almost all of the glass and clay instruments are variants of these shapes.



— sound sources for **Soft and Fragile Music** 1979

Resonant forms in glass and clay

The combination of open resonant shapes with highly idiosyncratic sound materials makes these instruments extremely interesting to me. The similarities and differences which emerge from the cut glass containers are beguiling. Attempts to fabricate matching tones from commercially available flagons have proved erratic due to the small peculiarities caused by the internal irregularities of the material. It is precisely these small differences which make a sound source interesting or not. The ear is the final arbiter. The more resonant the sound, whether alone or in combination with another, the more likely it is to be included. Resonance is also affected by choice of mallets, suspension techniques and spatial constellation. To maximise vibration, and therefore resonance, the vibrating edge must be kept free. This is the art of windchime construction.

Space as a Determinant of Sound Sculpture

The choice of sound materials for sound sculpture must be guided by spatial characteristics:

1. The acoustic of a location.
2. The natural ambient sound.
3. The use of space as a control for possible access and perception of the placed sounds.
4. Size and dimension of form relating to the field of perception.
5. Aesthetic style of the possible sound and visual textures and densities.

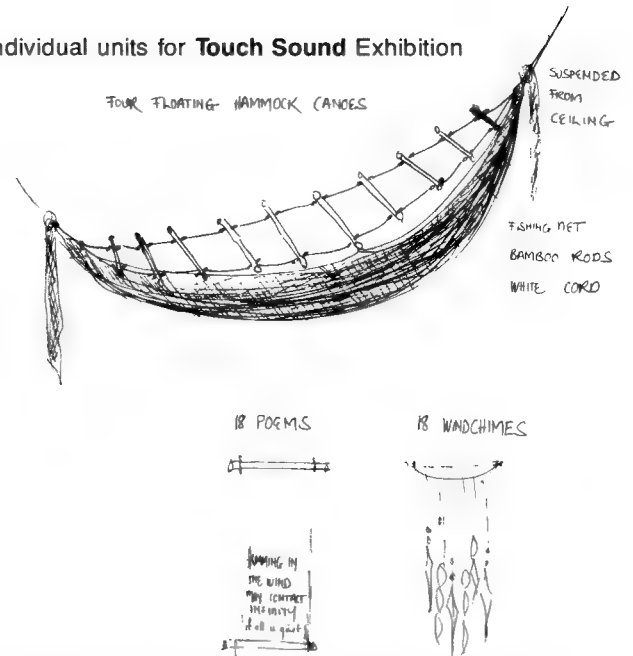
Sculptures are dependent upon three dimensional space. Sound sculptures also use time space and need to be appropriate to short and long term time spans. The seasonal changes, day and night, work and leisure time, need to be considered, as well as the expected life span of the sculpture. Urban sculptures in urban spaces need to take into account the daily sound occurrences, just as windchimes in a bellbird forest need to be complimentary to the natural environmental sound. Where sound sculptures are temporarily placed, especially in neutral environments such as art spaces, the artist is freer to superimpose a chosen sound ambience to change the sound field.

The audience activated the sculpture by rocking the canoes. The resonant materials chosen for the windchimes included glass, brass, shells, stones, fishing gear, bamboo and found objects. The sounds were spread through the spaces in different ways by suspending the windchimes of different timbres in different places in the hammocks.

The aesthetic form, sound articulation, audience participation and format for the workshops differed considerably in each venue. Yet several things were constant — the contemplative mood of my work, the general timbral combinations, the poems and the sounds of lapping water and gulls on the prepared tape. Many of the poems reflect my concern with time passing, the transitoriness of sound, resonance, space, timbre. The sounds in space coalesced and subsided in many ways at different times, according to the context and conditions. Overtone structure, directional hearing and lots of time were essential in the execution and perception of this work.

In performance, composition and sculpture, space and resonance provide the motivation, raw material and fillers for the working process. They permeate the content and method of all my work. Resonant sounds and good acoustic spaces seduce me. It's an addiction I can't restrain.

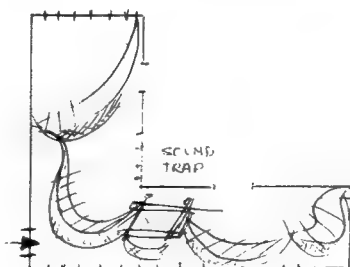
Individual units for Touch Sound Exhibition



The acoustics of a space have a tremendous influence on the possible resonance in all of the aforementioned situations. When they have reflective surfaces sound resonates freely. When they are not conducive the resonance is impeded or absorbed. The resonant properties of sound materials coupled with the spatial considerations of five exhibition venues were the guiding principles in constructing the **Touch Sound** exhibition for Victoria's 150th celebrations. This travelling exhibition moved throughout Victoria over a six month period from Warrnambool to Portland to Fitzroy to Hawthorn and to Mildura. It was constructed in a flexible format so that in each place a new version of the components could be erected, according to the geographical location, type of acoustic, floor space and access routes. It comprised four suspended hammock canoes containing 18 different windchimes, each inspired by a different poem, plus the accompanying recording which was made at the Warrnambool breakwater on location.

1. Listen to the first side of **Improvisations in Acoustic Chambers** with headphones to explore this effect. The listener can enter the sound environment of the composer/performer. Close your eyes.
2. Hear extract of **Genesis** on NMA Tape 4.
3. Also recorded on Move Records.

2. PORTLAND

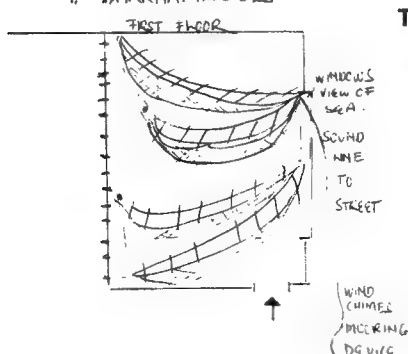


3. FITZROY

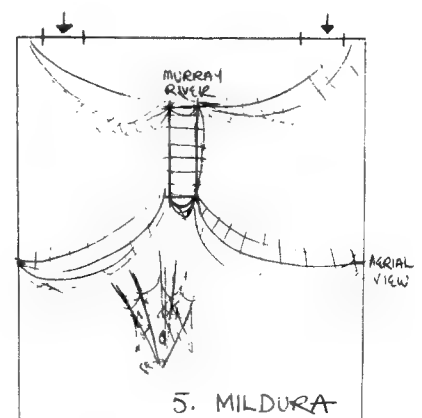
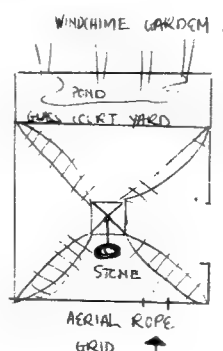


1. WARRNAMBOOL

forms and spaces —
Touch Sound
exhibition.



4. HAWTHORN



4ft Octave

T U N E D T O P H Y S I C A L P R E S E N C E



S Y M P A T H E T I C A L L Y R E S O N A T I N G

photography Ian Hobbs

Joyce Hinterding

Helen Gifford: an Interview

Lynne Stevens

The following interview was recorded on June 10th, 1981. It is published here for the first time with the permission of Helen Gifford. The ideas and opinions expressed in it are still held by her today.

Do you consider yourself to be self-taught as a composer?

Yes I do, really. In 1962 when I went overseas I thought, well, now I can really study with someone, because composition was not available as a subject when I started at the Conservatorium in Melbourne. But I couldn't really think of anyone in England that I wanted to study with. There was Benjamin Britten, surely, but I would have been more interested to study with someone like Ligeti, who was in Vienna at that stage; and there were obvious language problems with the Polish composers . . . I thought, well why ever couldn't I learn what I need to learn, what I want to learn, from their scores? Especially as they were pretty readily available within a couple of years. This is still the case and I really think this is as good a way as any of learning composition.

In 1962 the Polish school was important?

Yes, very important, they were the composers who interested me then. The Warsaw Festival had just come on to the map as somewhere really exciting. Donaueschingen was a very important outlet in Germany. England always did interest me in that I almost identify myself as an English stock composer. People from the continent who hear my music hear it as English music, which amazes me because my early ideal was French Impressionism, then right through Bartok, Stravinsky, Prokofieff, and they hear all this English sound, which is quite extraordinary.

Benjamin Britten wasn't an influence on you then.

I was so steeped in his music it's almost likely that he was a bit. Now the only person who's ever commented on that fact is Robert Gard, who in some of my writing for solo voice made the remark that it was a little influenced. He made the comment a little hesitantly though.

So, thinking about your trip overseas in '62 and the influence of the Poles and perhaps the English influence, how much of that experience do you think influenced the composition of *Phantasma* for Strings, which was written in 1963?

I see that still as a very young work. It hasn't got a great deal of poise, it's rather stiffly — not serial really, but I suppose serial in a sense . . . It's not the sort of thing I would have written even a few years later, but I had to work it out of my system. *Phantasma* could reflect more the 2nd Viennese School. Alban Berg's style of atonalism. Webern and Berg and certainly the early Schoenberg existed well and truly for me.

And that came from your days of study at the Conservatorium?

Yes, it would have, yes. *Wozzeck* made a big impression on me and I knew the *Violin Concerto* then, so I was still working through that influence. I didn't absorb any Lutoslawski until the other orchestral works, *Chimaera* and *Imperium*. And I never sounded particularly like Ligeti even though I greatly admired him. In one way though, I sensed that the system of composition he'd made his own was

almost going round in concentric circles, that it was a very, very narrowed vision. I didn't quite see how it would give me the range of expression I wanted to have if I adopted that sort of thing, so I never really used it.

Coming towards your later orchestral works, was he really as important?

Only in a modified sense. I preferred to work with less than the 12 notes. I think at no stage was I satisfied with just taking the 12 notes in sequence all the time. I'd work with a smaller cell, I found that was more expressive. I found it far too arbitrary, I never did consider taking the whole parameter of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. And as for the high-falutin' combinatoriality setup, this is the sort of thing I find unbelievably limiting. That's really into the nature of games with sounds, and the priority is the system rather than the sound. So I suppose I like something that allows for a more poetic means of expression.

So you did take a limited series of notes for pitch.

Yes. While I didn't like the system of composition that Boulez was expounding, I agreed with him when he made the comment to the effect that every composer, pretty well since diatonic composition, has inherently felt the need for increasing chromaticism to the point of almost total serialism. But I see it as a sort of male need to rationalise a natural tendency and they've gone too far as usual. It's like the Germans — they're so procedural. Schoenberg has just about worked out all his poetry by forming that system and then found he had to march to it. I never thought he wrote anything that compared to the works he wrote before the Great War.

What about the late expressionist period, like Pierrot, was that important to you?

I see that as a nice atonal piece, a beautiful thing. That was what, 1913. So I just think it's nonsense to, all the time, try and systematise all your thoughts. Why bother? If you're saying something that's valid and it satisfies you . . .

What models did you use for form?

I allowed form to evolve from sound. Form was never something I set out to fill with sound. I started with the sounds and saw what forms were suggested by them. Which is a long way round, I mean, my method of writing is slow. Absolutely inching along, or centimetering along (laughs). I'm starting a piece now and I've no idea what the form will be, and as it moves very slowly you really live it out and the form seems almost inherent in the nature of the music. That's the way I've worked, always . . . as exercises in your course at the Conservatorium you write invertible counterpoint, fugue, sonata forms and all that. This is a pointless exercise for me. I think if you can't arrange your own variety, interest etc. without having it all pre-structured for you that way . . . it shouldn't have to be set up in that way. Barry Conyngham has told me that he really enjoys doing that pre-planning bit and getting the shape before he starts writing. You know, some people get a lot of satisfaction out of "it's going to be this big, it's going to build there, it's going to be small there" . . . I just start at the beginning actually.

. . . and work to the end.

Yes. A lot of people don't start at the beginning; I mean, that's not so facetious. People who write novels tell you

they start at the end a lot of the time.

Well then, what models do you use for timbres and textures for instance?

Well, nowadays it's more according to the nature of the commission and so on.

I'm thinking more of your orchestral works.

I suppose it's the last orchestral work that I found interesting, exhilarating, whatever, that would no doubt influence me. There's a sort of sound in the air. In the late '60's there was a concentration on percussion, for instance. I remember I had six percussionists in **Chimaera**, and a harpsichord. So timbre was definitely big then. **Imperium** had a piano, it's a slightly different sound. The **Chimaera** sound was more accentuation on timbres and textures.

And there were no particular models for those? They were your own?

I'm trying to think back. No, **Chimaera** followed a trip to India and there was just a general sort of exotic sensation of colour — harmonic colour and instrumental colour — that I was interested in expressing. **Imperium**, even though it was the later work, was a more Romantic work and there was a concept of one culture clashing and being absorbed by another — the Western world and the Eastern world. So that was really a Romantic style, probably not as modern as **Chimaera** in some respects. In another way I now look at those works as being limited and unsatisfactory. I haven't been terribly interested in writing for orchestra since; there's so much to be resolved as a composer now in orchestral techniques, making the best use of an orchestra and writing for orchestra. The superb techniques of writing for orchestra that were developed in the nineteenth century had to be almost thrown away because of a system of composition that grew up in this century — a similar situation to do with piano writing too — you couldn't make the best of piano sound with this system of composition. So composers went off the piano unless they were going to be attacking the strings directly with hammers, or preparing the piano. I suppose my point is that we're not making the most of writing for orchestra or piano, that the orchestra as an instrument, or the piano as an instrument, is not really benefiting from the style of composition that existed through most of the 20th century.

Your trips to India and Bali. Obviously the trip to India has had an influence on Imperium, because, as you were saying before, it's the clash of two societies that you were working on.

Yes. Although at no stage could I say there was anything like a reflection of Indian music in any form. There was a piece that reflects the Indian idiom . . . that was **Myriad**, where I took three Gujerati melodies and elaborated on them in a sort of percussive context.

So you feel that, for yourself and for Australian composers in general, the non-Western influence is important?

Oh yes. Though it's nothing that they need self-consciously seek out. It's just that in the natural course of events they have heard it with new ears as the centuries progressed. They have realised that certain developments in Western music were akin to certain styles of Eastern music. At the beginning of the century you had Ravel and Debussy using woodblocks and cymbals and that was almost the Eastern influence. I mean, it was a terribly superficial approach, but as the centuries progressed, suddenly we were aware that Eastern music had a lot of interest for us. The sounds became increasingly fascinating to us as our own ears opened a little more and became accustomed. Japanese music, in particular the Gagaku orchestra. Traditional harmonies and textures of the ensembles. Indonesian music, the gamelans of course are fascinating: the highly dynamic gamelan music of Bali, and the very different Javanese gamelan music too, that we were slower to appreciate. It was dreamlike . . . Again, a sort of simultaneous, not organised, development was the sudden awareness of African music by so many composers in the 1970's, from Steve Reich who went to live there for a year, to Berio and quite a number of composers. In Berio's

Choro you'd hear brass ensembles almost . . . it sounds at first as if it is almost a complete lift of African music. Steve Reich's is, I think, but the influences are not completely assimilated initially. The first works reveal them and then later they are assimilated. It's made for some really remarkable developments in Western music — it's going to be the next cliché I expect.

In your method of composing is the use of the piano important and how do you use it?

Well, I think everyone who has learnt the piano since early childhood, as I had since the age of 8, is likely to try out anything they write, or come across in any other score, on the piano. But sometimes that is farcically wrong and inappropriate. So many works I have written are not for piano, or for anything that would sound at all appropriate on the piano: **Images for Christmas** for instance, for percussion and speaker, and **Myriad** for three flutes, and others for percussion . . . It would be really quite misleading, I think, to play certain of your works over, in the process of writing them, on a piano. Afterwards perhaps you could get some benefit but . . . and it's darned impossible to play something like **Chimaera** on the piano, absolutely.

So you hear as you're writing?

Yes. I have got a good harmonic sense. I can hear chords, quite complex chords, quite easily. I think this was developed in my playing the works of Stravinsky and Ravel. I've got an awful lot of their piano music. I've got piano arrangements of Debussy's orchestral works, a great many of the piano concertos of Bartok and the piano reductions of orchestral works, so I really did make the most of a naturally good ear by developing it that way. I seem to remember I did a thesis on the Augmented 11th of Ravel that he made his very own, when I was at the Conservatorium. I wrote pages and pages giving examples of how this chord was unique to his works, so I obviously had a particular interest in vertical sound.

So when you work, so you work in chords and their resolutions, or do you work in harmonic nuclei and clusters of sounds?

Well, certain chords can be particularly effective unresolved — this is dating back to the 19th Century or even earlier of course. So no, I'd say the impetus is a linear one rather than . . . there is a very strong sense of harmony, not vertical pitch aggregates, harmony. Because I hear harmonies to the 15th, you see. Say you've got maybe upwards of eight simultaneous sounds — I hear them as harmonies. If it's a dischord, it means it has probably got all twelve notes and then I'd cover the vertical pitch aggregate.

When you write, do you write in full score or do you write on a reduced scale in orchestration?

I always hear it for the instruments initially, but I do it in short score to get it down quickly. Short score can be about six staves though, and usually, too, it's at concert pitch so that I can check it quickly, readily. So I have this reduced piano score, a sounding pitch score that I work on, but always with the instrument in mind, never just, say, for a piano sound.

So, you don't work for a desired texture and then orchestrate it, you think immediately of the sounds, of orchestral colour?

Yes. Yes. Anyone's who's lived through all the French composers where the whole world is instrumental colour . . .

Your approach to melody and working that out in orchestral writing, is the linear approach important?

Yes it is. I suppose after saying all that about the harmonic sense being strong in my music, I'm a contrapuntal composer. The only time, I think Clive Douglas saw a score of mine he made that remark, "this is really just counterpoint". He was quite disarmed because he thought it was going to be something terribly spikey . . . a piece of mine called **Lyric**. Well, not unnaturally, given my training in the Conservatorium all those years; I was

doing vocal polyphony and fugue and invertible counterpoint and the whole six species. You can't buck your early habits really, and all those years learning Bach — it sinks into you. Anyone who studies the piano for about 15 years, I don't think they have any alternative as to how they are going to write really. You can tell many composers don't play the piano. Even I always thought you could tell Berlioz didn't play the piano. He had a rather underdeveloped harmonic sense, the triads were big. But marvellous composer though he is, that was a side of him that he wasn't so interested in, and other composers too. John Cage is rather numb in some ways, in composition. You can tell what instruments they do or don't play.

When you are writing a composition, do you sort it all out in your head before you commit it to paper, or do you work through a composition writing it down as it comes?

No. As it comes, absolutely, because I don't want any thought of what the end should be like to qualify or inhibit what I'm at at that present time. I like having all my options completely open at every instant.

So you write as it comes.

Yes. Yes. At the moment I'm doing a music theatre piece for a soprano and a few instruments . . . I'm getting the words from a chap whose doing the libretto a page at a time. I have no idea how it's going to end and it doesn't really interest me as, you know, I'm taking it all on trust . . . it's an interesting exercise, I've never done it quite this way before. I've done music theatre in the past and I knew very well how it was going to end, but this one, even the title, we are still not sure of what it is. It concerns the story of one woman, who he sees as a sort of Joan of Arc figure, based on the Iphigenia story, and that is all I know. So I'm just taking it . . . (as it comes). (*Ed: Iphigenia in Exile, composed for the soprano, Barbara Sambell with instrumental ensemble and chorus, to an original libretto by Richard Meredith. Shortly to be given its first performance.*)

Do you have a work-in-progress attitude to your work. In other words, do you have a number of things on the go at one time?

I dislike having that. I prefer to have one thing at a time. Because I keep it in mind all the time and I don't like there to be two things to think of . . . I always have usually some other work, like working for the Melbourne Theatre Company or . . . But it's always a bit of a strain if, say, I'm writing something for the Melbourne Theatre Company and writing another piece . . . I don't like taking more than one commission at a time. I prefer to work a piece through because then I like to start something else in a completely different style.

Have you had any experience in the field of electronic music?

No not really. That all happened after I graduated. I went to Holland and went to the Bilkhoven electronic music centre there and saw over it, and now another Australian woman composer, Jennifer Fowler, has been there, some years ago, and studied there and stayed there. But I think I have been writing for acoustic sound and instruments so long that it would have taken probably an enormous . . . well I think I would have come to a standstill for time while I worked out a new approach. I still had an awful lot I wanted to say for instruments and it just wasn't something that suggested itself to me. I'm awfully interested to hear anything that's done in that field, but it almost meant that I'd have to stop my normal style and approach and start something quite new. Well . . . if I'd been attached to a university, if I was teaching at a university or something, it might have been an easier step to . . . but I wasn't you see, I have never been attached to a university and I have never been at any institution where they have had an electronic music laboratory. The nearest I got was playing around with Bruce Clarke's bank of sound oscillators for a bit in the '60's. He was obliging, he let a few of us composers come and try our hand out and I spent a few hours cutting and splicing tape. And recording sessions, I have had a number of those . . . I'm fairly experienced

in actual recording procedures through the Melbourne Theatre Company which has its own recording studio, and all the productions with which I have been associated there. They've pretty well all required recording in part or in whole . . . pre-recording.

So, electronic music as such has not been important to you.

No. Not actual manipulating or assembling the sound from its essence. No. I expect now I'll never come to it. I'm interested in perhaps certain applications, contact mikes, that sort of limited approach.

What type of music does interest you now?

Well, I'm interested to hear whatever comes over the airwaves in, say, the previous year's festivals over in Europe. I'd really miss it if we never heard broadcasts of say the Holland Festival or the various festivals where a lot of the exciting new works are premiered . . . often, quite unexpectedly, a really interesting work pops up . . . The Paris Rostrum . . . or something . . . I'm quite ready to listen and sit through about sixty new works in a year and only hear one that interests me. That's about the usual ratio, so I suppose . . . anything new of Berio who is a fascinating composer. A lot of what he wrote was purely for theatrical effect, but he is an enormously talented composer who understands the craft of writing and who is expert at it, so what he writes now . . . He is still changing, quite surprisingly. A lot of his music is facetious and people make the mistake of thinking that's the real person, but he happened to live through that whole scene of the 1960's and that was the universal style . . . facetious music. He would be about one of the most interesting composers to me.

What type of compositions are you working on at the moment?

Well, that one music theatre piece, — music theatre interests me, — is for soprano and instruments. They are strange instruments . . . alto flute, clarinet, bass clarinet and percussion. It's deliberately limited. I want to do it with as few instruments as possible and it's going to be a minimum of thirty minutes. The piece before that was a commission for the Seymour Group in Sydney. It was played in April and was called *Time and Time Again*; that was for flute, clarinet, piano, cello, percussion — largely vibraphone. It was very fast — completely opposite to the one I'm working on now . . . very fast, and with the texture of the sound it was meant to be an entertainment piece, a piece for an occasion, a piece for Sydney — tinsel music for Sydney! So the one I'm on now is a completely introverted type of music. I was almost glad to go to the other extreme.

So music theatre is what you are working on mostly.

Yes, I enjoy this, and the music theatre piece I am still writing for Robert Gard, which I am ambling my way through at my leisure. I enjoy writing it and am almost reluctant to finish — I've put it to one side this year. (*Ed: Regarding Faustus, a one act music theatre piece, for solo tenor, ensemble and small chorus. It was completed in 1983 and received its first performance in an ABC-FM broadcast on Sunday, September 8th, 1985.*)

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FUTURISTS', EXPERIMENTERS &
THEORETICIANS WITH REFUGEE INSTINCTS.

A Living Art — Performance

Vineta Lagzdina

'Performance' defies precise or easy definition beyond that it is live art by artists. It draws freely on any number of references: music, literature, drama, dance, sculpture, architecture, film, fantasy. Taken out of the deadly auspices of concert halls, galleries and theatres, it can challenge accepted values, animate the ordinary, give the invisible visibility.

We are witnessing, as Anais Nin says, "a tremendous moment for women", here and now. We, as women, are unveiling our thoughts, unveiling our feelings, to show our true nature and reconstruct the world.

Music and dance, gesture and sound, are able to put us in touch with the spirits of the past and also of the future. We create in our own image. 'Performance' is most genuine when it truly reflects who we are and what we feel. In this way we create new myths. We have the power to control life forces and to reform life patterns.

This challenge is taken up in the works of Meredith Monk,

"where the voice starts dancing,
where the body starts singing,
where theatre becomes cinema."

For Pauline Oliveros it is in participatory and performed

meditative improvisations, and for Laurie Anderson, in multi-media events.

I believe it is necessary to reach into ourselves clearly and learn to articulate our own voices freely, fully and precisely, to make the best possible music we can.

Music is a very powerful medium. Each sound we hear or make has a life of its own; thus the end result of a composition is greatly determined by the design and arrangement of these sounds. A major element affecting my design and arrangement of sounds is the search for connection with the spirit and the subsequent musical transformation of inner experience. It is important to me that 'performance' offers a freedom in structure to explore and extemporize with form and content.

The following score is part of this process. Using my Latvian heritage as a palette, with the voice echoing past memories in melodic fragments from an ancient Latvian song, and treated through two tape recorders and a synthesizer, it is then recorded. Then, to add text, images, actions — a performance has evolved. Music is a very powerful medium.

SAUCU SAUCU nesa saucu

centering from the breath.....
voice

one breath

'ū' p (mp

interspersed melodic fragments

'ū' 'ā' ej saulīte

extemporize with melody, rhythm, words, dynamics
in treatment through tape delay

additive chorus
synthesizer sine waves

dod man svētu vakarū

The Black Snake
— score for female voice
and electronics

Disarray

Cindy John

During 1985 I have been composing using computer synthesis, and have had the opportunity to work with a score processing programme called GRASP, which was created by Brian Parish at La Trobe University. The computer composition, **Disarray**, was composed using this programme.

Disarray, defined as 'to throw out of order', seemed an appropriate title since it illustrates the structural formation of the piece: constantly reorganized sets interrupted by non set-orientated note groups. The overall idea was to have two sounds differing in either register or timbre, which, after being kept apart in many ways with different patterns of organization, eventually resolve by colliding or blending together.

The programme, GRASP (Graphic And Score Preparation), uses the orchestra which is in the La Trobe Sound Synthesis Library. The instruments in the orchestra include Bells, Piano, Drums, Trumpet, and an Additive Synthesis instrument. Over the past two years I have investigated all these instruments and used them in various compositions. This year, however, I have focused on the instruments with extra parameters. These parameters can be manipulated by the composer and change the sound quite radically. The Additive Synthesis instrument, for instance, has extra parameters for choosing different partials; the instrument in the sound synthesis selection at La Trobe University has six partials, but it has been altered to twelve partials to enable further investigation with harmonic and non-harmonic sounds.

A particular point of interest has been the use of groups of partials with fractional differences between them, the groups being separated by large gaps or intervals. All these sounds were organized to produce non-harmonic tones. Sounds were also manipulated by creating different amplitude envelopes: it was possible for each partial to have its own envelope, resulting in complex sounds.

In the composition, **Disarray**, I have used a number of very low tones, each having twelve partials and three different envelopes. These tones were characterized by long attack and decay times and overlapped each other in their durations as well. This process, combined with fractional pitch difference, created a slow beating sound which was made even slower using audio recording. **Disarray** begins at the slower speed and continues at normal speed.

These processes illustrate the many ways in which the Additive Synthesis instrument can be manipulated. Using the GRASP structure musical scores can be constructed with as much precision as desired. However, this method can be time consuming, and can also eat up computer synthesis time if complex tones are sought.

Composers of computer music choose their own style of presentation. I use a written manuscript score to notate the pitch sets and the basic rhythmic pattern. Once this has been established the reorganized sets are also written on manuscript but the remainder of the information is placed in the computer programme itself.

A pitch set is used only as an initial restriction on pitch material; there is no intention of following formal procedures of row organization. I regard the set simply as a structural tool, and not as a dominating principle in my compositions. Thus, sections not organized according to the set were also used in **Disarray**. These contrasting sections used very low sounds and the definite pitches and large intervals of the set were not considered appropriate:

fractional pitches with slight intervallic differences were required to achieve the desired effect of overlapping sounds.

It should also be mentioned that any errors which occurred during the data input procedure have been included in the final version of the score. Composing using computer synthesis can become very tedious during the score insertion process. Naturally, typing errors occur and it is left to the discretion of the composer whether to try and correct these errors — which would mean more synthesis time — or to make use of them as an advantageous element in the compositional process. The errors I am referring to are explained in the structural analysis.

Disarray has been based on the following set:



Ex. 1

Once the set had been stated a division was made beginning at the seventh tone and the tones were alternated in opposite directions through the set, starting at the left.



Ex. 2

After the segregation had been made, a simple retrograde of the set was used:



Ex. 3

N.B. The enclosed notes in brackets occurred accidentally after many score transfers and insertions of octave point pitch class values into the GRASP programme.

A grouping of the three versions was then formed:



Ex. 4

This grouping of the set versions was used extensively throughout the piece.

Disarray consists of two main sections in which the three versions of the set are used and then reordered in different ways, by means of registral, note grouping and instrument combination changes. The graph in Example 5 illustrates the overall structure of the piece, and indicates some of the parameters which define the sections, such as instrument, register and whether or not the notes are set-oriented.

The final notes of Ex. 6c and the octave imitations were repeated twice. Also illustrated are the grouping numbers: each note was repeated several times creating yet another pattern for time gaps in the groups. The squares indicate the absence of a note in the set, or notes which did not follow the 'set' pattern.

Section 3 of the piece was organized using a continuous line of the set in its three versions and their retrogrades; the whole line was still placed up high over the same sounds occurring underneath. This time, however, there

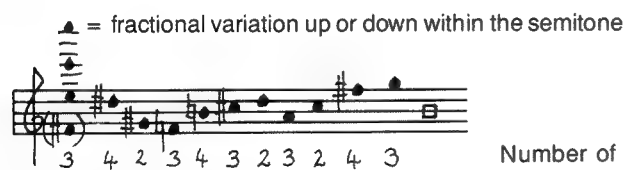
Ex. 5: Graph of **Disarray**

MAIN SECTION I

MAIN SECTION II

<p>Section 1</p> <p>Low sounds, at 2 speeds (non-set)</p>	<p>BRIDGE</p>	<p>Section 5</p> <p>A. Bells and drums. (set)</p> <p>B. Repeat of bells and drums (set) with additive synthesis part on top. (non-set)</p> <p>C. Second repeat of bells and drums (set), plus additive synthesis part (non-set) plus piano as well. (set)</p>	<p>Section 6</p> <p>Version of Section 2. (set)</p>	<p>Section 7</p> <p>2 final sounds. (non-set)</p>
<p>Section 2</p> <p>Octave displacement (set)</p>	<p>Section 4</p> <p>Brief slow bell part. (non-set)</p>			<p>TAIL</p>
<p>Section 3</p> <p>Acceleration and descent, followed by big bell sound (set)</p>				

Very low sounds were used in the introduction (Section 1), with occasional high Add6 chords, not organised by the set, being introduced. In Section 2, which enters over the top, the first version of the set and its variations were presented. These notes were placed very high in pitch, and while a version of the set was being played, interruptions were made with fractional variations of the set in smaller time values; the variations are octave displacements of the set:



Example 7. The next pattern consisted of one group of bells and the same group of drums again plus three, and so forth. At this point the pitch of the bells slowly rose and that of the drums descended so that at the end of the cycle of chords the pitches of both instruments were close together.

Once the pattern of the groups in Example 7 had been worked through another pattern was devised in which the order chosen resembled retrograde motion. At this point the bell pitches rose in octaves, and the drums alternated in groups of ascending and descending notes. The procedure can probably be most simply described as small ascents and descents followed by a larger descent at the end of the section (see Example 8).

Finally, the drums followed the original order of the groupings, and this time, the bells used notes from each bracket according to the number of groups involved. For instance, if the first bracket had three groups, there would be three notes of bell sounds at different octaves. This entire section of bell and drums was repeated with an Add6 section added (Section 5B), and then repeated yet again with the Add6 part and the piano instrument (Section 5C). Again, the Add6 part was not row oriented. The piano part, however, was. It used the set in the following way: Examples 3, 2 and 1 in retrograde movement, beginning at Example 3.

Group 1 Group 2 Group 3 Group 4

Drums and Bells in order of appearance

Ex. 8

At the conclusion of Section 5 another deep slow bell sound occurs. Faded into this note is a 'rendition' of Section 2 of the piece. My intention at this stage was to create a passage of notes, related to the second section, which would eventually fade out into the tail of the piece. By chance, before this idea was completely organized, a version of the second section of the piece was synthesized on the Vax computer, and due to a typing mistake of mine, a rather unexpected effect took place. So, this next, short section (Section 6) is really another version of the second section of the piece, and is faded into the foreground following the bells in Section 5, using audio technique.

The final two sounds, used in Section 7 of **Disarray**, are sounds that were found during tests carried out early this year. They fade in and out of one another to conclude the piece.

A recording of **Disarray** accompanies this article on NMATape 4.

Captions

Kay Morton

This article is a series of explanations of my composing — how I start writing a piece, the musical techniques I use and what is important to me in writing music.

Most of the music I have written is for voice — either choral or a combination of instruments and voice. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, I am a singer and it seems that generally one writes for the medium with which one is most familiar. I like the versatility of vocal timbres. And, most importantly, it involves language, which allows me to put concrete meaning into my music. Without words, writing music becomes just an exercise in aural pleasure, which is fine, but I like to convey more than that. I am interested in what is behind the real time sounds and the musical techniques and processes, such as the context and the functions and the effect of music.

Grin and Gesture,* was written specifically for 'Voisus', a chamber choir conducted by Anthony Briggs. I find it easier to think of ideas and to sit down and write music if I have a definite performance or purpose to work towards. I don't have a romantic image of myself as a 'composer' with an overwhelming desire to write music for music's

sake. The text for **Grin and Gesture** is based on this notion. I was faced with the problems of what text to use, what notes to write, making it easy to perform, a limit on the length of the piece, and having to complete it by a certain date. So the text was written with these factors in mind. It tells a little story of itself (as do some of my other pieces). I am trying to make the listener aware of what I am doing: looking at myself as a composer, the listener as listener, and the process of writing music. It has a tongue in cheek flavour — grinning at itself, at the ability to write music and at what we may expect music to be. In a sense the musical parameters are subsidiary to the overall idea, although they correspond to the meaning of the words.

Sounds Like . . . is also a story of itself, but it is more blatantly stated. My approach to writing music is to begin with a fairly abstract idea of something I would like to 'say', whether it relates to cultural, or musical concepts. I then design an overall structure and decide on the musical framework. Finally I determine what musical techniques (pitch, rhythm, etc.) to use, these often relating to the original concept. **Sounds Like . . .** is concerned with language and the sound of language. I first wrote the text, and then, in three stages, contorted it into just the vowel

sounds. It begins with approximately pitched vowels and a loose rhythmic guide. This 'theme' (music and words) is repeated three times, but with each repetition consonants gradually appear. In the final 'thematic statement' the text has become comprehensible English and the music notation is precise. This piece probably does not sound 'pretty' like **Grin and Gesture**. It would be fairly difficult to perform as it (deliberately) lacks clarity of structure and pitch gauges are few and far between; there is no set melodic/harmonic/serial organization, except for thematic repetition and the resulting familiar contours. The manipulation of the text is the important aspect of this piece — music is just the medium employed to 'orchestrate' the idea.

Musical aspects are more significant in **Morcel Morceau**, which has one text used in three different textures. The words are about music, structure, sound and language. The syntax of the words is continually altered, giving different meanings to each combination. In Parts 1 and 3 the music and words are unrelated — the purpose is to make use of the versatility of a choir, in various textures. Part 1 is an eight part 'lush' choral arrangement, with gradually changing thirteenth chords. For Part 3 the text is translated into French, German and Italian and is set as a double canon with melodic cells based on diminished seventh chords. I tend to avoid the use of strict pitch and/or rhythmic organization such as serialism or tonality, as they are, in a sense, secondary to my reason for composing. They are the tools I use to express my ideas, not the fundamental basis of my work. This notion is taken further in Part 2 of **Morcel Morceau**, which has no rhythm or pitch indications, only approximate pitch contours and some general directions such as fast or slow or in unison. There are guidelines for intonation and expression, but the performers are free to give their own interpretation, according to the meaning of the words or phrases. This piece, especially Part 2, is an example of my interest in areas other than music, such as theatre, language, sounds in general and semiology. The 'art music' world seems to have little cultural/social significance compared with visual arts, cinema and theatre, and writing. I try to incorporate some sort of cultural relevance into my composition.

I am also concerned with context and situations, and these are important in **Genuine Imitation** — it is a displacement of a previous musical genre, a thirteenth century motet. I very much like the motets of this period and decided I would write a twentieth century equivalent, using corresponding musical organizations and texts. The cantus firmus of the 13th century motet was based on a sacred chant melody. In mine I use a contemporary equivalent — a 'religious', well-known, popular song melody with the words, 'Is this real'. The 13th century duplum was in Latin (probably not spoken by any Tom, Dick or Harry in the 1400s) and the melody was more disjunct and dense than the cantus firmus. The text for my duplum is jibberish and the atonal melody is very disjunct. The original triplum provided the main tune and the text was often about love and lust. My triplum is more 'melodious' than the duplum and the words are a very silly love story. My motet is in $\frac{5}{4}$, whereas the 13th century ones were in triple meter. One aspect of the motets that I like is the abundance of dissonances: only the first beat of the 'bar' was required to be a concord, which is interesting in the context of the history and development of Western music and tonal harmony. Since tonality is no longer as relevant in twentieth century music, there are no rules for the first beat of the bar in my motet.

I also used a 'historical twist' in another work called **Changes**, which has 'unusual' instrumental groupings and some fairly rare/obsolete instruments, such as the hammer dulcimer and crumhorn. It consists of music in different historical styles, set in rondeau form.

I have started a short opera called **Chokita**, which also pertains to the idea of 'contextual twist'. I find opera — the idea of opera and everything that surrounds opera — interesting and amusing. (Grand) opera is grandiose; the singing, the orchestration, and the power of the music are extreme (especially in comparison with what might be the 'watered-down', popular, contemporary equivalent — the stage musical). The plot and libretto are frequently absurd and the dialogue is sung throughout. The opera-goers themselves are interesting in that they absorb (or do they?) the whole situation so seriously. It has become a ritual for the musically and socially elite.

In my 'comic opera' I have tried to exaggerate these qualities even more. The libretto is based on the ludicrous stories of other operas, incorporating the twists, the lusts and the tragedy required for a 'typical' opera. Musically it is a combination of original music and familiar tunes, blatantly plagiarised from other operas, musicals and popular songs, and placed and distorted according to where they fit into the story. I use the music of others because I find the effect of music, familiarity with songs, etc. important and interesting issues when writing music, or talking about it. I want to show that there are certain guidelines for the 'appreciation' of music, and that symbols exist which affect our interpretation of it. So my opera has all the trademarks of an opera: grandiosity, recitative, aria, trio, sprechstimme, parts sung in Italian, emotionalism, and other elements which indicate it is an opera. Not only is it an eclectic musical pastiche, but the scenes, characters and costumes are displaced, the scenes being set in different centuries. It is not intended for live performance but for video, as I want the audience to be distant — aware that they are observing an 'imitation' of an opera, and that involvement is unnecessary.

My latest piece is a **Fanfare** which I wrote for the Defence Force School of Music. First of all I did some 'research', looking up definitions of a fanfare so that I could decide on my approach to writing it. It was a problem for me as it has no text; for it to have any 'meaning' (mainly for my own satisfaction) I had to consider structure and context (present and historical) more than I would usually do.

I am also interested in composing non-notated music. I have written pop songs, music for film and electronic music. With David Chesworth I made a 'Super 8' film called **Suggestions**. The fragmented 'story' uses images of hands, feet and eyes. The structure of the whole film, aurally and visually, is very loose. The soundtrack consists of semi-improvised synthesiser and electronic keyboard music. The music is 'atmospheric' — sustained, slowly changing chords together with various fragmented, melodic motives. I have also written many short pieces with keyboard synthesisers and a Serge synthesiser: 'etudes' for synthesiser. The keyboard pieces use layers of repetitive minimal melodies, while the 'Serge' pieces are experiments in timbre. In my electronic music the aural aspects (as opposed to conceptual aspects) are more important than in my notated music. In many ways I prefer writing electronic music because it is more immediate and I can work with the sound directly.

P.S. Even though I appreciate being asked to contribute to this issue of NMA, I feel it is unfortunate that people think there has to be a 'Women's' Issue. I was asked to write an article primarily because I write music, not because I am a female. Why is there a need for a 'special', different issue for women — I feel it only perpetuates the idea of segregation. Is there going to be an NMA issue for tall composers or left-handed men???

* **Grin and Gesture** is included on NMATape 4.

NOTES ON MUSIC GRAPHICS

CATHERINE SCHIEVE



explosion - flying out



DOTS , DOTS & lines , lines , dense blobs.

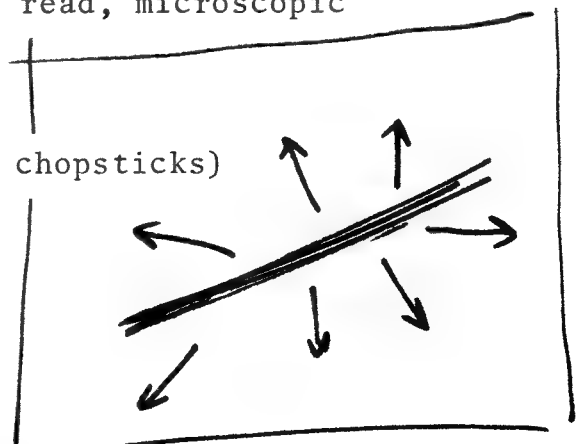
I have started composing a group, or theatre, of pieces which are explorations into various kinds of graphic notation; pieces which are to be seen as well as heard in performance. Since I am a painter as well as a musician, I am creating some very large scores to be read precisely by musicians as music, which also express their structures visually. I have completed one piece of the group, entitled WEB, which was performed/exhibited at the August 26 New Audience concert in Trinity Chapel. Eventually, I would like to exhibit and perform a group of these works, having several displayed in a gallery and performing them from time to time (a performable art exhibit; an exhibitable concert). These pieces are research into notation problems and questions of special interest to me, having to do with translation and interpretation of (gesture into) visual material into sound (through gesture), and, conversely, recognising sounds as visual image; asking to what degree sound and painting can be made to correspond to one another, since they are not intrinsically linked (traditional music notation being a historical, yet arbitrary, linking of sound and sign).

Some of the problems addressed in my composition WEB are:

- *** Developing a method for musicians to read circularly, from the center outward, from a large score displayed flat on the ground.
- *** Answering the question "what if this painting could be read as music?": Instead of translating a graphic sketch into music, I have made a system of color, line, and position that can be read into sound from the painting.
- *** Reading pitch as right-left shift around the circumference of a circular grid, rather than as up-down.
- *** Using background color to indicate timbral change.
- *** Using color to differentiate parts and to reinforce pitch location.
- *** Making a score that creates, in its performance process, a desired theatrical movement of players.
- ** Enlargement of a small sketch into a nearly-identical large painting that retains the required complex pattern of curved and intersecting lines.
- *** Notating, and teaching players to read, microscopic gradations of glissandi.

2 hands 2 brushes
(playing together, poking inward like chopsticks)

components: Knot / Vortex



Dots have direction -
are flying outward from core.

Ask what the paintings want.

Movements

short
jerky
strong
poking
jabbing
twisting
sputtering
aiming inwards
but flying outwards

some
are
silent

Things to look for:

axis
tilt

dots
lines
intersections

negative space
placement in containers
focus
direction of strokes
shapes made
grey/black/color
impressions
"energy"
parts/whole
size
distance
"3 dimensions"?
expression
related words
related sounds
depth
natural equivalents
sound translations
areas of concentration
vortex
holes
centers
movement/stasis

Where are the edges of paper

What is it - how does one make anything random

Swarming in axis center

What movement
could have made these.



Right hand

INTERTWINING, making a net. Not done.

IS there a center
how is center expressed
moving away
moving IN
static around

whirling - balanced - filigree

I threw down some "subliminal sketches": paintings done with various brushes and marker colors, without looking, to explore the FEELING of hand and arm movements, and the act of painting with a brush, and the FEEL of the brush and the paper, the not knowing of exactly where the brush ends and where the edges of the paper are. I tried not to look because I know I always do a certain kind of painting when I look-- with certain kinds of brush strokes and visual arrangement-- very well ordered and nice shapes. I wanted to escape this usual appearance of the things I do and just see the visual traces of my exploration with the feeling of painting. The traces DO look very different from what I usually do-- brush strokes are not so "well formed", and instead I get clouds and criss-crosses of fluttery motions

intersection

angle
type

The desire to make something LARGE
having only a small space .

implosion - flying in

Web of intersections
around open center
lines do not touch
at center - free floating

I did some with the right hand only, the left hand only, the right FOOT and the left foot (!) holding the brush between my toes. I find the activity to be very concentrated, almost like an improvisation with sounds, except I don't have the technique or previous experience with it that I do with sound improvisation and I certainly don't know what it will look like! Sometimes I keep a mental image of what I think it might look like, in my mind as I paint but this never corresponds with the final trace. I would now like to do some without thinking at ALL (if possible) about the visual trace, but just of the feeling and experience, or even about something else or not at all, just to see what my hand movements do by themselves.

I noticed the left hand does things which are very concentrated in one spot or along one axis, and look forceful and explosive, while with the right hand I KNOW much more where I am on the paper, and therefore try to cover the whole surface more, and have more elegant strokes in the process. The right hand actually does more diffuse work BECAUSE of its knowledge of its position and therefore attempting to compose the surface. While, the left hand just sits in one place and scratches. The right and left feet were the opposite---the right foot was more concentrated and made heavier gestures in a smaller space, while the left foot had less control and made lighter, more scattered patterns, but with a strange feeling of CENTER! In fact there is a hole in the center, with a tiny dot placed neatly inside it.....

pressure
speed

= width
dilution
darkness of ink

I am learning their language
ie, my gestural language
to know

What sound.

- 1) what I see as unique
structure in each one
- 2) what structural threads
run through all of them



facing in
a big
bagpipe
gesturing
bending
interlocking
drawing
the sounds

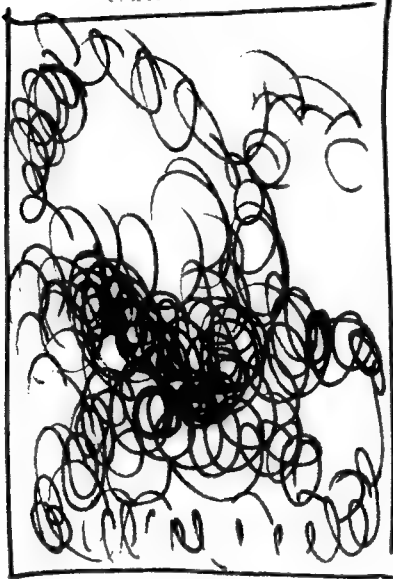
Left hand

Tangle

Make xeroxes and cut ^{OUT} some shapes

off center - creeping - near edge

Anyway, what do I intend to do about this? I wanted to do a random scatter to maybe start a piece with, that is, throw down something so fast and out of control that I wouldn't do my usual gestures, and instead, have some raw material to examine and measure and ponder on, to start developing some desires in the light of the scatter, and the ties in the light of my desires. Knowing that, it does not contain a piece or even a set of proper-do and it will be my mind working, with the starting point of the scatter, towards its own SCATTER itself is a demonstration of my mind's that I cannot escape orderliness, at least as much as possible for a starting means that I can start at any points forming a piece. I do not have any gesture, or musical idea, and the workings of me and I working on me.



What movements do these make.



Except, they LOOK so good! I actually like the appearance of these things and then, will that liking begin to influence the scatters that I make? (I know that a certain feeling or approach made one that I liked a lot visually, so I may try to duplicate that feeling--- but so far it has NOT worked). I would like to try and examine some BAD-looking scatters that appear...boring, as well as the nice ones anywhere-- not necessarily from something on the other hand, I do feel more excited about others.

STOP seeing them as bad/good paintings
See them as galaxy
riverbed

Compression - dense
rock formation



These paintings also are becoming an interesting experiment in and of themselves. I like to keep doing them with vaguely different approaches to each one, ie: "find the edges", "keep going until I think it's all black", "work with both hands at once", "stretch up as far as", "keep rotating", "all dots", etc etc IS THIS SCATTER? I think I am now composing these things, in fact I am treating them very much as I approach a sound improvisation; a combination of planning and following my instincts and chaos, paying attention and not paying attention. Maybe the paintings are a piece by themselves, without being converted into a piece?? But I would like to make a study of a few of them. BUT HOW. They are so complex, that they defy my usual starting-out analysis methods. How do I measure, connect, etc.. from these formless blobs? But they are not formless... I just have to find out their own working orders, not even by any of my usual methods of them.

tension - imbalance

LOUD metallic

net - web - all over ~~scribble~~

Explorations of the
paper, with a
BRUSH

Photograph the scatters like plant studies
or maps or satellite photos or
microscope exams. This will change
my concept of absolute size . (of the paper)

Try to play them as they are

dense / diffuse

each has energy, dark, pressure

bend pitch
to fit the
conditions

Right hand



performance

organic matter

how does this create the metaphor
stars mosses rocks etc...

: Can they be studied as sound?

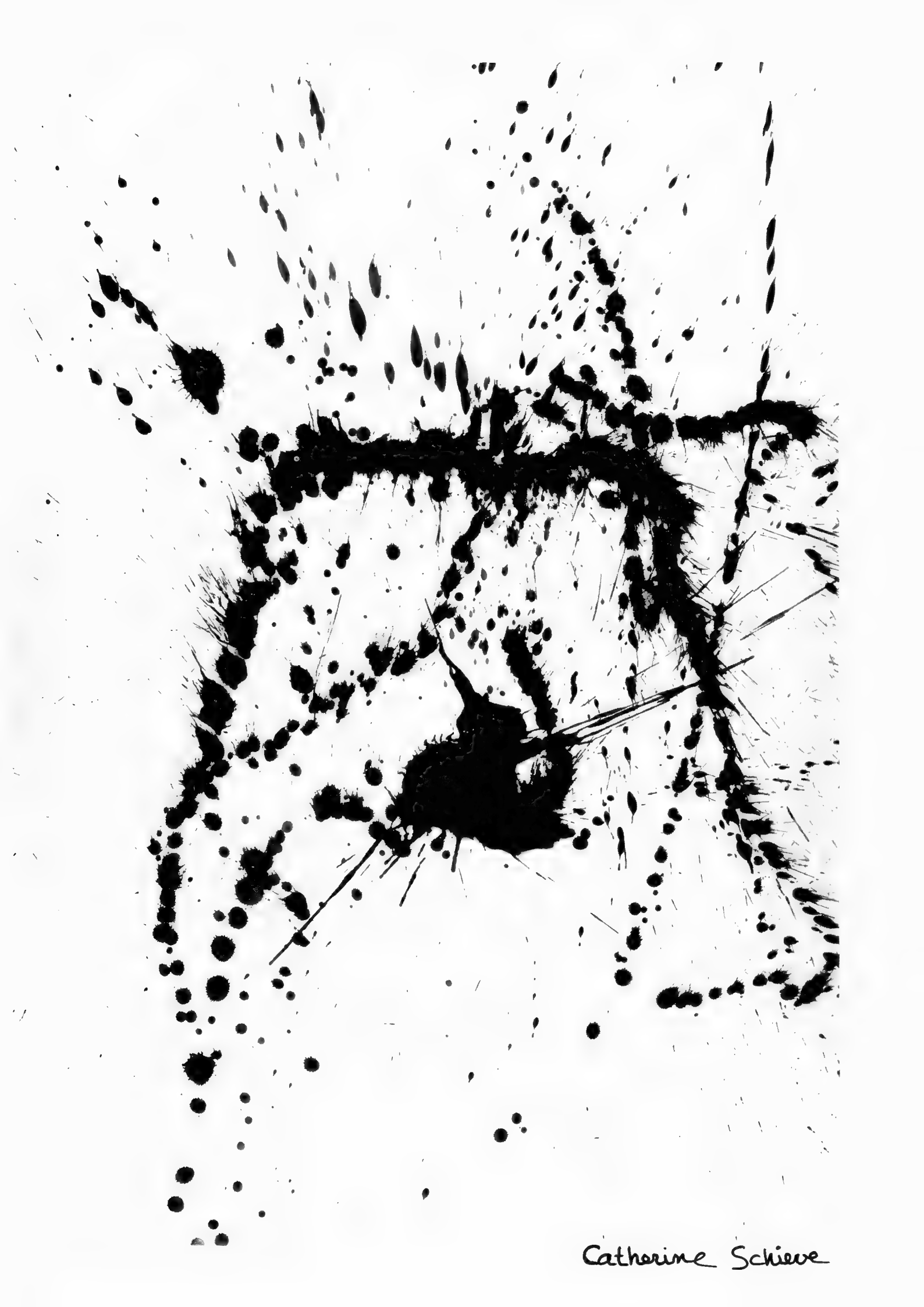


YES. Because that was my INTENT.

centered, but not on a spot

Both hands; one brush

WHAT IF THIS PAINTING COULD BE MUSIC?



Catherine Schieve

Jo Truman and Trevor Wishart Talk in a Noisy London Cafe, mid-July 1985

T.W.: *What is your approach to your vocal improvisations?*

J.T.: I have and do use my vocal improvisations to explore deeper areas of myself, to move past the rational and touch on areas of feeling which are not accessible by, or easily expressed with words. They are vehicles for exploring the less conscious parts of myself, usually called the 'intuition'. I develop a kind of vocabulary from this process and begin to build and refine statements which contain meaning.

T.W.: *What do you mean by 'meaning'?*

J.T.: It is the sense you get when you are arriving or have arrived at something significant. The work becomes a consolidating force and expression of that process at the same time. If I can successfully synthesise these processes with the voice being both the medium for the process and the expression of that process, then I feel that it has meaning. I cannot assume that it contains significance or meaning for others.

T.W.: *If this is some sort of spiritual self exploration, then what would you feel about, or how do you justify performing it to other people? I assume it is something more, you don't just do it in the bath, or in a meditation chamber?*

J.T.: Well, all one can hope for is that one's experience can be conveyed and communicated to others and that there is a common meeting point in the communication. I see performance as a kind of bridging. I don't see it all as a spiritual exploration, although that also can be involved.

T.W.: *Is it not then purely a therapy?*

J.T.: I feel that the self transforming element is an inseparable part of doing vocal improvisations. Perhaps this is just a fundamental aspect of using the voice. I feel I have to 'move with' the sounds produced in order for it to work for me and to effectively communicate anything to others. The cathartic element of work is important to me. I see that a problem has evolved in our use of the voice, that we have become separated in a sense from the important connections with ourselves and our voices, having been so caught up in creating a marketable product, in creating a vocal 'self image', in trying to keep up with what's fashionable.

T.W.: *Yes, the voice can be used to communicate in a very direct way, almost independent of any conventions about how we're supposed to use it. We can get*

behind the conventions. This can be applied to speech also. We all try to speak 'properly', in a certain sort of way. Adults usually speak on a fairly constant level, we don't vary our pitch, everything is being pitched at a certain degree of loudness. Whereas, you look at children, their voices have an extreme range, everything is extreme. We tend to lose all that and control our voices, not only in a musical way, but in everyday speech and communication.

When you say you work on an intuitive level, do you mean that you work purely from this, without being influenced by others around you?

J.T.: No, I can't and don't exist in a vacuum. You are always picking up information and, I feel, will use and bring up to the conscious what is relevant to you at the time. Thus you may end up sounding like someone else, but this does not necessarily mean imitation; just that you may find empathy in the statement that someone else has made. I don't believe in 'pure originality'. There is far too much emphasis placed on being original. You can only hope to be honest in what you are saying or trying to say.

I feel that through our various cultural conditionings and backgrounds we have learnt to block out feelings and emotions. An important part of work for me is uncovering, not reinforcing the blocks, but creating channels and passages through which feelings and information can come. This sounds like therapy but I feel it can be an important part of performance as well, that it is an aspect of performance which we have tended to prefer didn't exist. An important part of work for me is to express the barriers, and move through them, rather than using the work as a fortress behind which I can hide and disguise myself, though I think this is a very difficult thing to accomplish fully, tending to make you vulnerable. There is always a certain sense of separation, otherwise there would be no drive to reach others.

I feel that there is more flexibility, life and honesty in this approach. It is easy enough to push an automatic button and emit a sound, but I think the power to evoke and provoke occurs when you are in touch with the source of the sound within yourself.

T.W.: *You have referred to resonances when you are singing. Do you mean literally physical resonances within the body or emotional resonances.*

J.T.: I feel that they are inseparable.

T.W.: *Do you think they are one and the same or you just can't separate them out.*

J.T.: Well, I feel that I can manipulate sound so that it does resonate in different areas of the body, and 'come from' these areas: head, chest, etc. I feel that different emotions actually reside in different areas of the body, and you can sense what areas of the body have particular 'emotional resonances'. This of course is a very subjective thing, though in some ancient traditions, such as in Japanese and Chinese cultures, there have been certain chants, using various consonant and vowel shapes at certain pitches which are said to be sympathetic with 'resonances' of particular organs within the body.

T.W.: *It almost sounds like an Ancient Greek idea also: references to different parts of the body, expressions such as being 'phlegmatic', or the 'humours'.*

Do you think there is such a clinical relationship? My feelings are that there are spiritual resonances, and at a different level you use various resonance chambers within your body and unconsciously, without realising, certain emotions. But the actual emotional and spiritual states are not simply related to these things.

J.T.: I don't think you can draw lines and be too specific. I think there is danger in this.

T.W.: *No, it's like saying a high spiritual experience is located in the nose!*

J.T.: But perhaps by using the nasal resonance you may be able to generate for yourself a 'high spiritual experience'. Perhaps not.

T.W.: *Regarding your work with tape, you have said that when you listened back to it, you became more consciously aware of different aspects of the work. Does this mean you were able to observe the work in greater detail?*

J.T.: By taping and/or writing the pieces after I have performed them I can observe them from a different perspective, and the way I have experienced the sounds on, let's say, an unconscious level, takes on a new perspective, and often hidden feelings which motivated the sounds and the way I have subsequently arranged them become revealed.

T.W.: *Take for example, your multi-track works. You say that when you recorded the first track it is intuitive, but after this there is a certain amount of conscious decision when you work around the first track. It becomes semi-intuitive and more consciously constructed. Do you see this as a contradiction to your claim that the work comes from a purely intuitive source.*

J.T.: The multi tracked pieces involve quite a different process to the improvised vocal pieces. I don't claim that the vocal pieces spring up from a pure spring of intuition, unimpeded by any conscious process. I think that it is a mixture of many faculties. With the particular piece that you're referring to I laid the foundation down on one line which was not at all preconceived. That provided the structure for a different sort of process to take place. I listened to this line several times before a strong image came to mind, quite like a landscape. The sounds then took on a sort of illustrative function, 'drawing' the imaginative scene I was experiencing, so in a sense the sounds took on a visual quality. The piece was based around a poem on someone whom I am close to, at a time when I was struggling on questions of identity in relation to that person. Even though the landscape had little to do with the poem, it was quite extraordinary that when I wrote down the piece after it was made, I could see quite a scenario unfold which was very descriptive of the way I perceived her within her environment, and her influence within me. This was quite an eye opener for me. It was personally very revealing.

T.W.: *Is it a problem when there is a certain amount of distancing involved, when it is not like talking to a friend for instance? There are two extremes in attitude to art. Some people regard it as a formal procedure, and there are others who regard it as pure expression. The more you remove the barriers, the better it is. Others will object to any formalisation of the concert processes. You're obviously at this end of the spectrum, but the question is, how far? If there is a certain sort of detachment, how do you approach this?*

J.T.: It cannot be like talking to a friend, but there is a certain amount of depersonalisation involved. I like to see it as addressing the audience as a whole, as an organism, keeping in touch with myself as much as possible.

T.W.: *What you are saying reminds me of a shamanistic idea, when the witch doctor, or whoever, takes on the grief or whatever of the whole group and acts it out for the group, so it has this cathartic element. Obviously in our culture, art doesn't serve that function. Do you think that in our time the function of art, of performance may change in that direction?*

J.T.: I think in some senses it already does, though it is

less overt and intent on embracing that function. I think that the performer often expresses collective emotions. It is hard to generalise. Again it comes back to two extremes and the degree with which the performer is cloaked in conventions. I don't think that performance today specifically caters for this function, though there may be elements of it involved.

T.W.: *We try very hard to rationalise this away, by having professional critics and assessment, as if the function of the performance is to display the technique of the vocalist.*

J.T.: Yes, I think assessing things in a rigidly intellectual framework often obscures what is going on. I suppose that this stems from a society which puts a lot of weight on the rational and the scientific.

T.W.: *It strikes me that in our sort of society there are two things here. One is the individualistic competition which destroys links between people, and the other is the pretence that people don't have motivations. So we pretend, say, that the defence policy is a rational decision based on objective criteria about how best to defend ourselves, rather than its having to do with machoness and fear and aggressiveness. We tend to deny that these things really exist, which is very dangerous.*

T.W.: *Can you talk about voice and healing?*

J.T.: Well, I feel that the use of the voice can have great potential for healing and regeneration.

T.W.: *How do you see this working?*

J.T.: Well, sound is a force and an energy which I believe can have power to move emotions and energy. The breath also, used in particular ways, can have great healing and regenerative potential. The combination of voice and breath can be very strong.

T.W.: *Almost like a vocal Reichian therapy?*

J.T.: I think this is possible. The way that you use the voice can either help reinforce an emotional pattern or condition or help resolve or dissolve it.

T.W.: *I wonder if exploring the voice is evidence that one is breaking down the barriers, or whether it is the force which breaks down the barriers?*

J.T.: I think it is an expression of a process, but a force which in turn can create change or can become a catalyst for change. I think that you can learn about your own personal 'connection' with your voice and use the voice to evoke a particular feeling or emotion, or you understand what sounds can be used as a 'trigger'.

T.W.: *I remember reading about the training of a shaman where part of the training was learning skills which appeared like 'con' tricks, but on another level were actually symbolic acts. You're almost saying that in your work there is a distancing involved, that it is not just that you go on stage and express these feelings because you know these techniques, but you're able to evoke these feelings because you know these techniques, which is a different thing. Do you mean that the interpretation was there all the time, hidden within the piece itself?*

J.T.: Yes.

T.W.: *Can I be a devil's advocate for a moment and say are you sure these things were in the music, and it wasn't just your interpretation after the event?*

J.T.: No, what I feel happened in this instance was that my imagination created the landscape to 'give space' and allow the emotions which I was feeling at the time, in relationship to the issue of this herself and myself, to filter through. The emotions took on an abstracted form of sounds. The piece was a catalyst for many insights consequently.

MUSIC AND THE EXHIBITION
PEACE AND NUCLEAR WAR IN THE AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE*

Wendy Hiscocks



A nucleus of three artists, Jan Birmingham, Darani Lewers and Tanya Crothers, asked for music to accompany their exhibition. Such a subject needs a particularly sympathetic response from an associate artist; in addition to the sympathy I felt for their cause I could see parallels between their subject and the contemporary composer's predicament.

Thirteen large canvasses, all dealing with Australian subjects, focused on humanity's relationship to its environment, and on what people would lose in the event of Nuclear War. As a parallel to this, I thought of the composer's relationship to the public — the public being the composer's environment.

Our technologically advanced era alienates us more and more from nature and is ultimately capable of destroying both. Alienation has also occurred between audiences and twentieth century music. Living has become technological; the arts have become heavily institutionalized. The one aspect of music to flourish has been musicology. Its rise has been prodigious and highly influential, on composers even more than performers. The most obvious illustration of this is the profusion of technical analysis in programme notes for concerts of new music. Past centuries regarded this as unnecessary: composers preferred to keep their underwear hidden and to let the music speak for itself. One suspects that many composers now write more for the musicologist than for the performer, let alone the audience.

The alienation is fast becoming one between composers and performers. There are highly respected artists of my acquaintance, both here and overseas, who were previously involved in the presentation of new music, but who now devote less time and energy to its performance; these artists have found that most of the music gives inadequate returns for the effort put into deciphering it. They feel that convoluted notation could be there to impress rather than to communicate. Unfortunately, it only manages to fatigue the performer. Examination of many new scores suggests that the notation could be drastically simplified without compromising the music. At best over-complexity may be the result of obscured creative thinking, even if the ideas are potentially good. Another problem is that many composers have yet to find an effective means of notating rhythmic complexities which have outgrown traditional means of notation this century. Meanwhile, the result is a shrinking market of performers for contemporary works and with it the quality of performances suffers.

I know that, as a composer, I am putting my head in the lion's mouth by saying the foregoing. My reasons for doing so are my own experiences of these problems and my feeling that it is necessary to remove the needless barriers which exist between various musical disciplines.

Another philosophical aspect of the 'Peace and Nuclear War' exhibition and the accompanying music is its creation by a team of women. On the one hand, the sex of the composer or artist is of less interest to me than the quality of work. On the other hand, maybe woman is able to

introduce new ideas into music composition, or influence the direction of an art form dominated by male thinking for hundreds of years. One aspect in which she may have something unique to offer is in developing shapes and growth patterns of sound more akin to natural organic processes, and capable of leading to new ways of structuring and proportioning music.

"... we become convinced that Australia is uniquely placed to take the initiative in developing strategies for global survival."

(From the catalogue of the exhibition)

Australia can benefit in many ways from the geographical isolation that is often regarded as its disadvantage. The unique flora and fauna form the environment for both the ancient Aboriginal culture and a relatively young settlement. The latter, not having the weight of European tradition, is more mobile. Such an environment is capable of cultivating great originality of thought. The only counter-danger to the current rise of Australian nationalism is the tendency to reject outright the artistic traditions of Europe which are rich in knowledge and craftsmanship. This will not help our inferiority complex about European standards, the best of which should be amalgamated with the original products of our own country to create art of great worth.

**This exhibition toured Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney during March-September 1985; the music was sponsored by the Music Board of the Australia Council.*

